

Foundations 3

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Lesson 1 God's Love for Us and Our Response

Psalm 86:15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

On the night that Jesus was taken away to be tortured and then die on the cross, one of Jesus' disciples wanted to fight. This disciple pulled out a sword and cut off the ear of one of the men who came to arrest him. Jesus told him to put away his sword. Then He told His disciples that He had the authority to call twelve legions of angels to His rescue.

A legion in the Bible is at least 6,000 troops. This means that Jesus could have called 72,000 angels to come and rescue Him. But Jesus did not want to be rescued. Jesus wanted to die on the cross to save us from sin, from death, and from hell. The cross was not an accident. He could have stopped the crucifixion at any time. But He didn't. Why? Because he loves us!

Let's read those verses:

Matthew 26:51-53 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

⁵² *"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"*

To love is the greatest commandment. Jesus replied: "'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.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:36-40).

We love God because He first loved us. God talks more about his love for us than he does about our love for Him and others.

In 1 John 4:19 the Bible tells us, *"We love him, because he first loved us."* Yes, we must love God and others, but God wants us to know that He loved us first. He wants us to know that all true believers are God's beloved.

Colossians 3:12 *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;*

God has chosen us and we are his holy and beloved people.

A. How do we know that God loves us?

We know that God loves us because he sent His Son into the world to die on a cross for our sins.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Romans 5:8 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

The greatest act of love is for someone to give his life for someone else!

John 15:13 *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

Jesus was tortured, he suffered, and then he died for our sins. He did this because He loves everyone in the world. If people believe in Him and what He has done for them by dying on the cross, they can have eternal life.

Paul the Apostle wrote, *"The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"* (Galatians 2:20b).

It is a wonderful thing that God, who created everything, would care so much about us. It is such a powerful expression of love that he would give himself for us! We should praise Him every day for his great love and kindness towards us.

B. Can We Be Separated From God's Love?

Romans 8:37-39 *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Demons cannot separate us from the love of God. All of life's situations cannot separate us from the love of God. Satan cannot separate us from the love of God. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

C. God's Love is a Gift

Ephesians 2:4-5 *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

The word grace means to receive something that you did not earn. If you work and get a salary, that is not grace. If you receive a gift because you are loved, that is grace.

Grace is the free gift of God.

Grace is God saving sinners who only deserve judgment.

Grace is God's love in action.

We don't deserve to be loved, but God loves us anyway!

God is gracious and wants to extend His grace to everyone.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

D. How Should We Respond?

1 John 4:9-11 *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

First, God loved us. Because he loves us, we should thank Him and love Him back. God also says that because he so loves us, we ought to love one another.

We read in 1 John 4:19, *"We love God because He first loved us."*

Christianity is all about love. This love started with God. Nothing can separate us from it. We did not earn it, but we can pass it on! Let us rejoice today that God loves us. Let us continue this love by loving Him back and loving others.

"Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8b).

Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus chose not to call the angels to rescue Him?
2. How do we know that God loves us?
3. Can We Be Separated From God's Love?
4. How Should We Respond?

Lesson 2: Joy — The Strength That Keeps You Going

Imagine this scene: Thousands of people are gathered in the middle of a city. The sun is barely up. A priest named Ezra stands before the crowd holding the Word of God. Beside him is a leader named Nehemiah. From six in the morning until noon, they read and explain the Scriptures to everyone.

As the people listened, something powerful happens.

They began to cry.

Why?

Because they realize how far they had drifted from God. They suddenly understand their sin, their mistakes, and how much they need Him.

But then Nehemiah says something surprising: *“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”* — Nehemiah 8:10

That is one of the greatest truths in the Bible: God’s joy gives us strength.

Not fake happiness.

Not pretending problems don’t exist.

Real joy.

The kind of joy that helps you keep going when life is hard.

Joy comes from knowing God is with you, no matter what happens.

The Apostle Paul wrote: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”* — Philippians 4:4

Notice that the Apostle Paul said always.

That means:

- when life is easy
- when life is stressful
- when you succeed
- when you fail
- when people support you
- when people hurt you

God still wants us to live with joy.

That sounds impossible at first.

So how can someone actually do that?

How Can We Have Joy During Hard Times?

The Bible says we can still have joy because God is doing something bigger than we can see.

Trials can actually make us stronger.

James says: *“Consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”* — James 1:2

Think about athletes.

Nobody gets stronger by sitting in the shade eating mangoes.

Strength comes through resistance.

Training.

Pressure.

Perseverance.

The same is true spiritually.

God can use hard moments to grow us stronger, wiser, and more faithful.

Three Huge Reasons Christians Can Have Joy

A. We Have Eternal Life

If you belong to Jesus, your story does not end with death.

God forgives sins.

God saves us.

God promises eternal life.

That means the worst thing is never the last thing.

B. God Can Bring Good Out of Bad Situations

The Bible says: *“In all things God works for the good of those who love him.”* — Romans 8:28

That does NOT mean everything that happens is good.

Some things are painful and terrible.

But God is powerful enough to bring good out of even the hardest situations.

C. Jesus Is With Us

Even though we cannot physically see Jesus, we can still know Him and love Him.

The Bible says believers are filled with *“an inexpressible and glorious joy.”*

“Even though you have never seen Him, you love Him. And though you do not see Him now, you trust Him and are filled with a joy so wonderful and glorious it cannot be expressed in words.” — 1 Peter 1:8

That means God can give us supernatural joy that goes beyond circumstances.

Joy Is Actually Good for You

Did you know the Bible says joy even helps your body?

“A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.” — Proverbs 17:22

People filled with joy often have:

- more strength
- more hope
- more encouragement
- better attitudes
- stronger relationships

Joy changes the atmosphere around you.

How Do We Receive Joy From God?

The Bible says joy is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5

That means joy grows in our lives as we walk with God.

Here are some simple ways we can grow in joy:

Pray

Talking to God changes us.

Prayer reminds us we are not alone.

Read the Bible

God's Word fills our minds with truth instead of fear.

The Bible is like spiritual fuel.

Praise and Thank God

Thankfulness changes your focus.

Instead of only seeing problems, you begin seeing God's goodness.

Repent and Obey God

Sin steals joy.

Obeying God brings peace and freedom.

King David prayed:

"Restore to me the joy of your salvation." — Psalm 51;12

Spend Time With Other Christians

Encouragement matters.

God never meant for Christians to walk alone.

Love and Help Other People

There is incredible joy in serving others and sharing God's love.

Even heaven celebrates when one person turns to God. *"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* — Luke 15:10

Walking With the Holy Spirit

The Christian life is not just about rules.

It is about walking with God daily.

The Holy Spirit guides us, strengthens us, comforts us, and fills us with joy.

The more we walk with God, the more His joy grows inside us.

And remember:

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Not your talent.

Not your popularity.

Not your success.

His joy.

That joy can carry you through anything.

Discussion Questions

1. How can we have joy when bad things are happening to us?
2. Why do you think God wants us to rejoice even during hard times?
3. Which way of growing in joy stood out to you the most?
4. How can joy give strength?

Lesson 3: Peace — Calm in the Middle of the Storm

²³ Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴ Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵ The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

²⁶ He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

²⁷ The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!” – Matthew 8:23-27

Have you ever had a moment where everything felt out of control?

Maybe your heart was racing.

Maybe you were worried about school, family, friends, work, farming, or the future.

Maybe it felt like your mind was spinning at full speed.

Now imagine this:

A violent storm crashes across the Sea of Galilee. Waves slam into a small fishing boat. Water pours in. The disciples panic because they think they are about to die.

And where is Jesus?

Sleeping.

Not worried.

Not panicking.

Not freaking out.

Sleeping.

The disciples wake Him up shouting:

“Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!”

Jesus stands up, speaks to the wind and waves, and suddenly everything becomes completely calm.

That story teaches us something powerful: Jesus can give peace even in the middle of chaos.

Not after the storm.
Not once life becomes easy.
Right in the middle of it.

Peace the World Cannot Give

Jesus told His disciples: *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives."* — John 14:27

The world offers temporary peace:

- money
- popularity
- entertainment
- success
- comfort

But those things never last forever.

God offers something deeper:
a supernatural peace that stays with us even during difficult times.

That peace comes from knowing:

- God is with us
- God loves us
- God forgives us
- God is still in control

Peace With God

One of the biggest reasons Christians can have peace is that Jesus forgives sin.

The Bible says: *"The punishment that brought us peace was on him."* — Isaiah 53:5

Jesus took our punishment on the cross so we could have peace with God.

Think about that.

Every mistake.
Every sin.
Every failure.

Forgiven.

That changes everything.

When we truly understand God's forgiveness, peace begins to fill our hearts.

Prayer and Peace Go Together

The Bible gives one of the greatest promises about anxiety:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:6-7

Instead of carrying fear alone, God tells us to pray.

Tell Him what is bothering you.
Tell Him what scares you.
Tell Him what hurts.

And the Bible says God's peace will guard your heart and mind.

That means peace can stand like a guard around your thoughts.

A. What We Think About Matters

Imagine feeding your brain nonstop negativity:
fear, hatred, gossip, anger, garbage.

Eventually, your heart will feel anxious and restless.

But the Bible says: Think about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. — Philippians 4:8

What fills your mind affects your peace.

That is one reason reading the Bible matters so much.

God's Word gives direction, wisdom, hope, and peace.

The Bible says: *"Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path."* — Psalm 119:105

B. Sin Steals Peace

The lesson also teaches something important:

Sin and peace do not work well together.

When people run away from God and live in sin, they lose peace.

But repentance brings peace back.

King David experienced this after his sin. He cried out to God for restoration and forgiveness.

God wants us to turn away from sin because He loves us and wants us to walk in freedom and peace.

C. Thankfulness Brings Peace

One simple way to grow in peace is gratitude.

Thank God:

- for life
- for salvation
- for family
- for friends
- for prayers He answered
- for strength during hard days

Thankfulness changes our focus.

Instead of only seeing problems, we begin seeing God's goodness.

Heaven Gives Us Hope

Jesus told His followers: *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."* — John 14:1

Why?

Because heaven is real.

Jesus said He is preparing a place for believers with Him forever.

This world is not the end of the story.

For Christians, the future is filled with hope.

That truth brings peace.

The Big Truth

Peace is not pretending problems do not exist.

Peace is knowing God is with you even when problems DO exist.

The storm may still rage.

Life may still be hard.

But Jesus can give calm in the middle of chaos.

And His peace is stronger than fear.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus was able to sleep during the storm?
2. What is the difference between God's peace and the world's peace?
3. How can prayer help someone who feels anxious?
4. What is one way you can grow closer to God this week?

Lesson 4 Forgiveness

God commands us to forgive others! If God can forgive us of all the awful things we've done, then we can obey Him and forgive others.

In this life it is hard to have peace if you have anger and bitterness towards others. Forgiving others helps us to grow in the Lord and become more mature!

If we have bitterness or anger towards others, we should confess this sin and God will purify us! 1 John 1:9 says, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*"

In the Gospel of Matthew the Apostle Peter asked Jesus a question about forgiveness.

Matthew 18:21 *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"*

Perhaps Peter thought, "Seven times is a lot. Jesus will think I am very forgiving!"

But Jesus does not want us to forgive someone who sins against us seven times.

Jesus wants us to continue to forgive!

Matthew 18:22 *Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.*

Seven times seventy is four hundred and ninety.

What Jesus is saying is that we have to always forgive!

People will do and say mean things.

We must forgive them, be nice to them, and respect them.

We have sinned against God and God has forgiven us! God has forgiven us more than four hundred and ninety times!

Because of Jesus' death on the cross, God has forgiven all of our sins. Jesus is perfect and because He offered himself to be a sacrifice for our sins by dying on the cross, He is able to take the punishment for our sins and bring us back to a right relationship with Holy God. All we must do is repent of our sins and believe in what Jesus has done for us. Everyone who believes in Jesus can have all of their sins absolved. The Bible says that God has removed our sins as far as the east is from the west.

Psalms 103:12 *He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*

We are supposed to live like Jesus! 1 John 2:9 Whoever says he abides in him [Jesus] ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Jesus provided forgiveness for everyone, so we should be forgiving as well!

We are to love everyone – even our enemies. Jesus said in Luke 6:27, *“I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.”*

We need to be nice to everyone! We need to show respect to everyone, even our enemies. We cannot be mean to anyone, even if they have offended us.

Jesus told a story about a man who would not forgive others in Matthew 18:23 *“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*

On that day, if a man borrowed money and could not return it, the man could be put in prison, and his wife and children were made slaves until the money was returned.

It was very dangerous to borrow money.

In this story, the man owed ten thousand bags of gold.

This is an amount equal to millions and millions of meticals.

It would be impossible for someone to return this much money.

This story is given to help us understand forgiveness.

This man had a debt he could never pay.

His wife and kids would be slaves forever.

He would go to jail forever.

Matthew 18:26 *“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me, ‘he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything. ‘27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.*

He canceled the debt.

He did not have to pay back anything!

He was free!

He was forgiven!

He should have rejoiced.

He should have been very thankful.

Matthew 18:28 *“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.*

One hundred silver coins is a lot, but not impossible to pay back. One good harvest and he could pay back the silver.

Matthew 18:28b He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. 29 ‘His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back. 30 ‘But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

He was forgiven a debt he could not pay.

His fellow servant only owed a little bit.

His fellow servant begged for forgiveness.

But he would not forgive him.

He would not show him mercy.

He had his fellow servant thrown in jail until all the money was paid back.

This is terrible.

He was forgiven

But he would not forgive his fellow servant.

Matthew 18:31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32 ‘Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’

This is what God wants to say to us!

God has forgiven us more than four hundred and ninety times.

God has forgiven us a debt we could never pay.

We would have to spend eternity in hell paying for our sins.

But God forgave us!

Now we must forgive our fellow servants.

The Bible says that we should forgive the way God has forgiven us.

Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

God also says, If we will not forgive others He will not forgive us.

Matthew 6:14 *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

When the master heard that the man he forgave would not forgive others, he was very angry.

Matthew 18:34 *In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."*

It is so important that we forgive people. That means that we still love people who do mean things to us. We are still kind to people who insult us. We still show respect to those who gossip about us.

Is there anyone you are angry with?

Is there someone that you treat badly? God says you have to forgive them!

God says you have to love them. Love everyone.

Even if they offend you seven times seventy times!

Continue to love and continue to forgive and you will be like your Father in Heaven.

Side note: Obeying God's command to love and forgive does not mean you must allow others to abuse you. If you are in an abusive situation, seek godly counsel and report it to the police. You can love and forgive someone and also seek justice at the same time.

Reflective Questions

1. Is there someone I need to forgive?
2. How has God forgiven me?
3. Do I treat others with kindness when they hurt me?
4. Why is forgiveness important for my heart and relationship with God?

Lesson 5: Grace

The Parable of the Prodigal Son from Luke 15:11–24

Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

“Not long after that, the younger son gathered all he had and set off for a distant country, and there he wasted his wealth in wild living.

“After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

“So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

“He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

‘I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

‘I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’

“So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

‘Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate.

‘For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”

Imagine this scene: A young man demands his inheritance from his father.

In that culture, that was basically saying: “I wish you were dead. I just want your money.”

And then things get worse.

The son leaves home and wastes all the money on parties, bad decisions, and wild living.

At first, life probably felt amazing. Freedom! Fun! No rules!

But eventually the money ran out.

Then came hunger.

Loneliness.

Shame.

Soon, he was feeding pigs and wishing he could eat their food.

That is rock bottom.

And finally, sitting there dirty, broken, and starving, the son realizes:

“I need to go home.”

But he doesn’t think his father will welcome him back.

He expects punishment.

Rejection.

Anger.

He plans a speech: “Father, I have sinned... I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

So, he starts the long walk home.

And then comes one of the most powerful moments in the entire Bible.

The father sees his son far away in the distance.

And what does he do?

Does he slam the door?

Does he yell?

Does he say, “You ruined everything”?

No.

The father RUNS to him.

He hugs him.

He kisses him.

He welcomes him home.

The son expected punishment.

Instead, he received love.

The father says:

“Bring the best robe!”

“Put a ring on his finger!”

“Prepare a feast!”

“Celebrate!”

Why?

Because the son who was lost had come home.

This Is Grace

The son did not deserve:

- the robe
- the ring
- the party
- the celebration
- the forgiveness

But the father gave them anyway.

That is grace.

Grace means receiving a gift you did not earn.

The Bible says:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” — Romans 3:23

That means every single person has sinned.

Nobody is perfect.

Nobody earns heaven.

Nobody can stand before God and say:

“Look how good I am.”

But God still loves us.

That is amazing news.

A. You Cannot Earn Salvation

A lot of people think Christianity is about trying really hard to be good enough.

But the Bible says salvation is a gift.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...” — Ephesians 2:8

Think about a birthday gift.

If someone hands you a present and then says:

“Okay, now pay me back \$500.”

That is not a gift anymore.

Grace is free.

Jesus paid the price for our sins on the cross so we could receive forgiveness freely.

Jesus Is God’s Grace to the World

The Bible says: *“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.”* — Titus 2:11

Jesus lived a perfect life.

Jesus died on the cross.

Jesus rose again.

Why?

So, sinners could be forgiven.

That means no one is too evil.

No one is too far gone.

No one is beyond God’s love.

If the father welcomed the prodigal son home, God can welcome us too.

B. Grace Changes Us

Grace is not permission to live in sin forever.

Grace changes hearts.

When people realize how much God loves them, they begin wanting to follow Him.

Not because they are trying to earn salvation—
but because they are thankful.

The Bible says Christians receive:

- forgiveness
- peace
- the Holy Spirit
- spiritual gifts
- a relationship with God

All by grace.

We Can Come to God Boldly

One of the best things about grace is this: We do not have to hide from God.

The Bible says: *“Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence...”* —
Hebrews 4:16

That means when we fail, we can still come to God.

When we struggle, we can still pray.

When we feel weak, God still invites us near.

Why?

Because His love is bigger than our failure.

C. The Big Truth

Grace is one of the greatest gifts in the universe.

You cannot buy it.

You cannot earn it.

You cannot be good enough for it.

It is freely given through Jesus Christ.

And just like the father ran toward the lost son...

God is ready to welcome people home.

Discussion Questions

1. Why was the father's reaction to the son so surprising?
2. What does grace mean?
3. Why can't people earn salvation by good works?
4. What does this story teach us about God's love?

Lesson 6: What Happens After We Die?

Every person eventually asks the same question:

What happens after we die?

Movies guess.

Television guesses.

People offer opinions.

But the Bible gives a clear answer.

Our bodies do not last forever. Every person will one day die. Some die young. Some live to old age. Yet the Bible teaches that our souls continue beyond death. Life does not end when the body dies.

Jesus told a powerful story that helps us understand what happens next.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

In Luke 16:19–31, Jesus told the story of a rich man and a poor man named Lazarus.

The rich man enjoyed luxury, comfort, and wealth. Lazarus was poor, hungry, and covered with sores. Most people probably assumed the rich man was blessed and Lazarus was unfortunate.

Then both men died.

Everything changed.

Lazarus was carried to a place of comfort with God. The rich man found himself in torment. A great separation existed between them that could not be crossed.

¹⁹ “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

²⁵ *"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'*

²⁷ *"He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'*

²⁹ *"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'*

³⁰ *"'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'*

³¹ *"He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"*—Luke 16:19–31

Jesus was teaching that earthly success is not what matters most. The most important question is whether a person knows God.

Jesus asked: *"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?"* (Mark 8:36 WEB)

A person may gain wealth, power, fame, and success, yet still lose what matters most.

What Happens After Death?

The Bible teaches that believers who die go to be with Christ.

Paul wrote that *to depart and be with Christ is far better* (Philippians 1:23). He also taught that *to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord* (2 Corinthians 5:8).

The Bible describes heaven as a place where God removes sorrow, pain, death, and suffering forever. We will look at heaven in the next chapter.

Jesus also taught that there is a place of judgment for those who reject God. He spoke about hell because He wanted people to understand the seriousness of eternity and the importance of turning to God while there is still time.

The Two Roads

Jesus said there are only two roads.

"Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it." (Matthew 7:13–14 WEB)

One road is broad and popular. Many people travel it.

The other road is narrow. It is the road of faith, repentance, and following Jesus Christ.

Every person is on one of these roads.

Why Did Jesus Come?

Every person has sinned. Because God is holy, sin separates us from Him.

But God loves us.

Jesus came to save us from sin, death, and judgment. He died on the cross for our sins and rose again so that we could be forgiven and receive eternal life.

The Bible says: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23)

A wage is earned.

Eternal life is a gift.

No one can earn salvation by being good enough. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Do Not Be Deceived

The Bible repeatedly warns:

"Don't be deceived." (1 Corinthians 6:9)

Many people believe everyone goes to heaven. Others think God will never judge sin. Some believe they can wait until later to think about spiritual matters.

But Jesus taught that eternity is real and that our choices have eternal consequences.

The Apostle Paul warned that those who continually live in rebellion against God should not expect to inherit God's kingdom. Yet he also reminded believers that many of them had once lived in sin but had been washed, sanctified, and justified through Jesus Christ.

⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.—1 Corinthians 6:9–11

Satan wants people to think everything is fine. He wants people to ignore God's warnings, delay repentance, and trust in themselves instead of Christ.

But God lovingly calls people to turn to Him.

What Is Repentance?

Repentance means changing direction.

It means:

- Admitting our sin
- Turning away from sin
- Turning toward God
- Trusting Jesus Christ

The good news is that God forgives those who repent and place their faith in His Son.

The Most Important Decision

The Bible says: *"It is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment."* (Hebrews 9:27)

One day every person will stand before God.

That is why Jesus proclaimed:

"Repent, and believe in the Good News." (Mark 1:15)

No one has to remain separated from God.

Through Jesus:

- Sins can be forgiven
- Hearts can be changed
- Eternal life can be received

The question is not whether eternity is real.

The question is where we will spend it.

Today, if you believe in Jesus Christ, trust in His death and resurrection, and turn from your sins, God promises forgiveness, a new life, and eternal life in His presence.

Only Jesus saves.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the story of the rich man and Lazarus teach us about what happens after death?
2. Why is a person's relationship with God more important than wealth, success, or popularity?
3. What does it mean to repent?
4. If a friend asked how someone can receive eternal life, what would you tell them?

Lesson 7: Heaven Is Our Real Home

Imagine this: You wake up in a world with:

- no pain
- no fear
- no sickness
- no death
- no crying
- no hospitals
- no loneliness

Everything is filled with joy, peace, and the presence of God.

That place is called heaven.

And the Bible says heaven is real.

A. Jesus Made a Way to Heaven

The reason heaven is even possible for us is because of Jesus.

Jesus came to earth to save people from sin, death, and hell. Through His death on the cross, forgiveness became possible.

Without Jesus, nobody could enter heaven.

Why?

Because heaven is holy.

Sin cannot enter God's perfect kingdom.

But God loved the world so much that He sent His Son to rescue us.

The Bible says: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever should believe in him might have eternal life."* — John 3:16

That is the greatest rescue mission in history.

B. Jesus Is Preparing a Place

Before Jesus returned to heaven, He told His followers something incredible.

He said: *"I am going there to prepare a place for you."* — John 14:3

Think about that.

Jesus is preparing a place for His people.

Not a temporary shelter.

Not a tiny apartment.

Not a backup plan.

A home.

And Jesus promised He will come back for those who belong to Him.

That means Christians do not just hope vaguely about the future.

They have a promise from Jesus Himself.

C. Paradise

When Jesus was dying on the cross, one criminal beside Him believed in Him.

Jesus told that man:

"Today you will be with me in paradise." — Luke 23:43

Paradise.

That is the word Jesus used for heaven.

Can you imagine hearing those words from Jesus Himself?

The criminal had made terrible mistakes.

He could not go back and fix his past.

But he trusted Jesus.

And Jesus saved him.

That shows how powerful God's grace really is.

Sometimes people hear the words “eternal life” and think it just means living forever.

But the Bible teaches it is much bigger than that.

Eternal life means:

- being with God forever
- living in glory
- experiencing perfect peace
- enjoying paradise
- receiving God’s blessings forever

It is life the way God intended it to be.

D. The Book of Life

The Bible says that believers’ names are written in a book called the Book of Life.

“Everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb...” — Revelation 13:8

Jesus even told His followers:

“Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” — Luke 10:20

Think about that.

Out of all the things people celebrate:

- money
- fame
- popularity
- trophies
- success

Jesus says the greatest reason for joy is knowing you belong to God forever.

E. Citizens of Heaven

The Bible says Christians are already citizens of heaven. Philippians 3:20

That means this world is not our final home.

Earth is temporary.

Heaven is forever.

That changes how Christians live.

Jesus taught people not to spend their whole lives chasing earthly treasure that can disappear.

Instead, He said, *"Store up treasures in heaven."*

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."— Matthew 6:19-21

Things on earth break.

Rust.

Get stolen.

Wear out.

But eternal things last forever.

God Wants People Saved

One of the most amazing truths in this lesson is this:

God wants people to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 states that God *"desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"*. This passage highlights God's universal desire for salvation and grace through Jesus.

That is why Christians share the gospel.

The message of Jesus is GOOD news.

People can be forgiven.

People can receive eternal life.

People can become children of God.

Today Is the Day

The Bible warns that nobody is promised tomorrow.

That is why Scripture says:

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” — 2 Corinthians 6:2

The invitation to follow Jesus is open now.

And the Bible promises:

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” — Romans 10:13

That is incredible hope.

The Big Truth

Heaven is real.

Jesus is preparing a place for believers.

Paradise is coming.

And through Jesus Christ, eternal life is available to everyone who believes.

That is why Christians live with hope—even during hard times.

Because this world is not the end of the story.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is heaven called paradise?
2. What did Jesus promise to prepare for believers?
3. Why does the Bible say Christians are citizens of heaven?
4. What do you think will be the most amazing part of heaven?

Lesson 8: Resist the Devil

Matthew 4:1-11 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

*"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"*

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'^[d]"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'^[e]"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Imagine being alone in the wilderness for forty days.

No fast food.

No snacks.

No energy drinks.

No pizza.

No breakfast burritos.

Nothing.

That was Jesus.

After fasting for forty days, Jesus was extremely hungry. And at that exact moment, Satan showed up to tempt Him.

The devil basically said: *“If You are really the Son of God, turn these stones into bread.”*

Now think about how tempting that would have been.

Jesus had the power to do it.

But instead of giving in, Jesus answered with Scripture:

“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”—Deuteronomy 8:3

Satan tempted Jesus again and again.
And every time Jesus answered with God’s Word.

Satan lied.
Jesus stood firm.

And finally, Jesus said: “Away from me, Satan!”

And the devil left.

That moment teaches Christians something huge: Temptation is real—but God gives strength to resist it.

A. The Devil’s Goal

The Bible teaches that Satan wants to destroy people.

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. —John 10:10

From the very beginning, Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Through temptation, sin entered the world.

Sin brought:

- pain
- death
- suffering
- separation from God

But then came Jesus.

And the Bible says:

“The Son of God appeared to destroy the devil’s work.” — 1 John 3:8

That means Jesus came to defeat:

- sin
- death
- hell
- and the power of Satan

That is why the cross and resurrection are so important.

B. Jesus Won the Victory

The Bible says Jesus broke the power of death through His death and resurrection.

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. — Hebrews 2:14-15

Think about how amazing that is.

The very thing Satan used to enslave people—death itself—was defeated by Jesus.

That is why Christians have hope.

Because Jesus did not stay in the grave.

He rose again.

Discussion Questions

1. How did Jesus respond when Satan tempted Him?
2. Why is it important to know and read God's Word?
3. What did Jesus defeat through His death and resurrection?
4. What can you do when you are tempted to sin?

Lesson 9: Christians Do Not Need to Fear Satan

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.—1 Peter 5:8

God tells us that if we would stay alert and watch for temptation we can stand against all of Satan's plans.

Satan looks for opportunities to lead people into sin, but if Christians are careful about what they think, watch, listen to, and do they can overcome.

The Bible teaches that Christians have a real enemy. Satan is like a roaring lion. Satan seeks to tempt people, spread lies, and pull them away from God. But believers do not need to live in fear because Jesus is far greater than Satan.

Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Through His death and resurrection, He defeated sin, death, and the power of the devil. The Bible makes the ending clear: Satan does not win. One day he will face final judgment, and God's kingdom will triumph forever.

So how should Christians respond?

First, they must trust in Jesus. We are not strong enough to defeat Satan on our own, but Jesus is. Victory comes through dependence on Christ, not confidence in ourselves.

Second, Christians must resist temptation. The Bible says, "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4:7). Sometimes the wisest thing a believer can do is simply walk away from temptation before it gains a foothold.

Third, Christians should fill their minds with God's Word. When Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus answered every lie with Scripture. God's Word helps believers recognize deception, stand firm in the truth, and resist the enemy's attacks.

The Bible also tells believers to put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6). This includes truth, righteousness, faith, salvation, God's Word, and prayer. Just as a soldier wears armor for protection, Christians must rely on the spiritual resources God provides.

The Armor of God Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² 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. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Most importantly, believers are not alone. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit lives within every Christian.

"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

The Holy Spirit is God. He guides, strengthens, comforts, and empowers believers. Because of His presence, Christians do not need to fear Satan or demons.

As the Bible says:

"Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

Believers have forgiveness, eternal life, the Holy Spirit, and victory through Jesus Christ. Darkness does not get the final word.

Jesus does.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do Christians not need to fear Satan?
2. How did Jesus respond when Satan tempted Him?
3. What role does God's Word play in resisting temptation?
4. How does the Holy Spirit help believers live for Christ?