



# Corinth Missionary Baptist Church

*"The City of Faith"*

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**WINTER – 2025**

*December 2025 – February 2026*

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Senior Pastor

**Bishop William Davenport**

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*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.* — Jeremiah 29:13

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**\*All Bible references are quoted from the NIV unless otherwise stated.**

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A Bible study that digs deep into the church, both universal and local. Engage in a study that renews your understanding of the mission of the church while rediscovering your place in both the universal and local church.





**CORINTH  
MISSIONARY  
BAPTIST  
CHURCH**

**ADULT  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
CLASS**



# ADULT

## FALL 2025 SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

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*You can also follow the lesson by joining live each Sunday morning via our website:*

<https://www.thecityoffaith.org/sundayschool>



## Sunday, December 7, 2025

### Lesson 1 – “Who is Jesus Christ”

Printed Text: Matthew 16:13-20, John 8:58; John 10:30-33

#### **Matthew 16:13-20 KJV**

*13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ*

#### **John 8:58 KJV**

*58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

#### **John 10:30-33 KJV**

*30 I and my Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

#### **Introduction**

Unlike the question “Does God exist?” the question of whether Jesus Christ existed is asked by relatively few people. Most accept that Jesus was truly a man who lived in Israel 2,000 years ago. The debate begins with the discussion of Jesus’ full identity. Almost every major religion teaches that Jesus was a prophet

or a good teacher or a godly man. But the Bible tells us that Jesus was infinitely more than a prophet, a good teacher, or a godly man.

#### **Questions to ponder...**

- Who did people say Jesus was?
- Who did Peter say Jesus was?
- Who did Jesus claim to be?

#### **John 8:58 KJV**

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#### **John 10:30-33 KJV**

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So, who did Jesus claim to be? Who does the Bible say He is? First, He is God in the flesh. Jesus said in John 10:30, “I and the Father are one.” At first glance, this might not seem to be a claim to be God. However, look at the Jews’ reaction to His statement. They tried to stone Him “for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God” (John 10:33). The Jews understood Jesus’ statement as a claim to be God. In the following verses, Jesus never corrects the Jews or attempts to clarify His statement. He never says, “I did not claim to be God.” When Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), He truly was claiming equality with God.

In John 8:58 Jesus claims pre-existence, an attribute of God: “Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” In response to this statement, the Jews again

took up stones to stone Jesus (John 8:59). In claiming pre-existence, Jesus applied a name for God to Himself—I AM (see Exodus 3:14). The Jews rejected Jesus' identity as God Incarnate, but they understood exactly what He was saying.

- ***Why did some of the Jews respond to Jesus' words by wanting to stone Him?***

Other biblical clues that Jesus is God in the flesh include John 1:1, which says, "The Word was God," coupled with John 1:14, which says, "The Word became flesh." Thomas the disciple declared to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), Jesus does not correct him. The apostle Paul describes Jesus as "our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). The apostle Peter says the same, calling Jesus "our God and Savior" (2 Peter 1:1).

God, the Father, bears witness of Jesus' identity as well: "But about the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom'" (Hebrews 1:8; cf. Psalm 45:6). Old Testament prophecies such as Isaiah 9:6 announce the deity of Christ: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (emphasis added).

- ***Why is the question of Jesus' identity so important?***
- ***Why does it matter whether Jesus is God?***

Several reasons:

- ✓ *C. S. Lewis, in his book "Mere Christianity", pointed out if Jesus is not God, then Jesus is the worst of liars and untrustworthy in every way.*
- ✓ *If Jesus is not God, then the apostles would likewise have been liars.*
- ✓ *Jesus had to be God because the Messiah was promised to be the*

*"Holy One" (Isaiah 49:7, NASB). Since no one on earth is righteous before God (Psalm 53:1; 143:2), God Himself had to enter the world as a human.*

- ✓ *If Jesus is not God, His death would have been insufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Only God Himself could provide an infinite, eternally valuable sacrifice (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).*
- ✓ *God is the only Savior (Hosea 13:4; cf. 1 Timothy 2:3). If Jesus is to be the Savior, then He must be God.*

- ***Today, who do people say Jesus is?***
- ***Why is the answer to this question essential?***
- ***Who do you say Jesus is, and how does your answer compare to Peter or the Jews' responses?***

Jesus had to be both God and man. As God, Jesus could satisfy God's wrath. As a man, Jesus had the capability of dying. As the God-man, Jesus is the perfect Mediator between heaven and earth (1 Timothy 2:5). Salvation is available only through faith in Jesus Christ. As He proclaimed, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

***Reflect on who Jesus is — God in flesh, the Messiah, humanity's only Savior.***

If your response is more like that of the Jews, seek to know Him more. God's Word along with historical evidence has plenty to say about who Jesus claimed to be and what He actually did. If your response is more like Peter's, thank God for who He is specifically and praise Him for what He has done.

*Close in prayer...*

**NOTES:**

[illegible]





**Sunday, December 14, 2025**

## **Lesson 2 – “What is the Supremacy of Christ?”**

**Printed Text:** *Matthew 5:17-20; Galatians 3:23-25*

### **Matthew 5:17-20 KJV**

*17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.<sup>18</sup> For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.<sup>19</sup> Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>20</sup> For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

### **Galatians 3:23-25 KJV**

*<sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.<sup>24</sup> Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

### **Introduction**

The supremacy of Christ is a doctrine surrounding the authority of Jesus and His God-nature. In the simplest of terms, to affirm the supremacy of Christ is to affirm that Jesus is God. Merriam-Webster's dictionary defines “supreme” as “highest in rank or authority” or “highest in degree or quality.” In essence, there is none better. The supreme of something is its ultimate. Jesus is the ultimate in power, glory, authority, and importance. Jesus' supremacy over all is developed biblically primarily in Hebrews and Colossians.

### **Questions to ponder...**

- *How is supremacy defined and observed in our society today? In your life?*

Think about what you spend your time and money on, how you treat others, what your free time looks like. What do these things reveal about what you value as supreme?

A main theme of the book of Hebrews is explaining the work of Jesus in the context of the Old Testament system. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament Jewish traditions and roles. Another main theme of Hebrews is that Jesus does not simply represent a new way of doing things. Rather, He is supreme. He is the actual fulfillment of the old way of doing things and is therefore greater than those ways. Concerning the temple system under the Mosaic Law, the author of Hebrews writes, “But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.” (Hebrews 8:6).

In essence, Jesus is greater than the Old Testament system. He both encompasses and supersedes the old way of doing things. This is evident in the many comparisons of Jesus to Old Testament roles and rituals. For instance, we are told that “because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:24–25). Jesus, therefore, encompasses the Old Testament priesthood and is supreme over it.

### **Matthew 5:17-20 KJV**

*17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.<sup>18</sup> For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.<sup>19</sup> Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>20</sup> For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

### **Galatians 3:23-25 KJV**

*23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.<sup>24</sup> Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.<sup>25</sup> But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

- ***What is Christ's connection to the Law and the Old Testament?***

Hebrews explains that Christ is supreme over more than just roles and systems. Hebrews 1:3a says, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word." Similarly, Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form." Essentially, Jesus is God.

Colossians 1:15–23 is labeled "The Supremacy of Christ" in some Bibles. In this passage, Paul makes it plain that Jesus is over all things. Christ is called "the image of the invisible God" and "the firstborn over all creation" (Colossians 1:15). The word firstborn may seem confusing. It does not imply that Christ was created (as in the doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses). Instead, the term firstborn refers to a position of authority. To be "firstborn" was to hold an honored position. Paul immediately goes on to explain Jesus' role in creation: "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on

earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him" (Colossians 1:16). This means that Jesus is not created but is Creator. He is God.

- ***How is understanding Christ's supremacy over the Old Testament, the Law, and creation important to our faith?***
- ***How does a misunderstanding of this lead to further error and misrepresentation of God?***

Paul goes on to say, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" (Colossians 1:17–18). Paul highlights multiple areas in which Christ has authority—over creation, over the Church, over death, and finally "in everything." Christ is both before all things and encompasses all things ("in Him all things hold together").

Therefore, Christ is supreme. This doctrine is essential to our view of and worship of Christ. The supremacy of Christ affirms that Jesus is fully God. He is not simply a man greater than the rest but is truly above all creation, as only God can be. This truth is essential for our salvation. God is infinite and, therefore, our sin against Him is an infinite offense. In order to atone for this offense, the sacrifice must be infinite. Jesus, as God, is infinite and thus an able sacrifice.

- ***How is Jesus supreme over creation, over the Church, and over death?***
- ***What peace and hope do we have as believers that Jesus is supreme over everything?***

That Jesus is supreme excludes us from saying that He is only one of many ways to God. He is not just a good moral teacher whom we may choose to follow; rather, He is God, and He is over all. Jesus' supremacy also makes it evident that we cannot atone for our own sins.

In fact, “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). Jesus both fulfilled and replaced that system. Salvation is not based on works (see Ephesians 2:1– 10). And, once we are saved, Jesus’ supremacy shows us that we cannot aspire to be like Him of our own strength. Jesus is unlike any other, supreme over all. Christians are called to be like Jesus, but this is through the work of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:12–13; Romans 8).

The supremacy of Jesus teaches us that He is not simply a spiritual being above the rest. Paul tells us that through Him all things visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth, i.e., spiritual and physical, were created (see Colossians 1:16). Hebrews 1:4 calls Jesus superior to the angels. This truth negates any tendencies toward angel worship. Jesus created the angels and is above them. We are explicitly told He is greater than they. Therefore, we need only worship Jesus. Similarly, that Jesus created the things of earth means that creation is not worthy of our worship. Jesus is supreme over both the physical and spiritual realms, thus giving both arenas importance while still remaining sovereign over them.

- ***How should the supremacy of Christ affect your worship?***
- ***In what ways does your worship reflect the supremacy of Christ?***

When we understand the supremacy of Christ, we have a more accurate view of Him. We more fully understand the depth of His love; we are more able to receive and to respond to His love. Theologians believe that Colossians was written, in part, to combat heresies rising in Colossae. It seemed fitting to Paul to affirm the supremacy of Christ in order to quash these misled beliefs. He affirmed Christ’s supremacy, His lordship, and His sufficiency for us. Hebrews explains the link between the Old Testament covenant and the new covenant of Jesus. It reveals the old system as a shadow of the ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The

supremacy of Christ is central to an accurate view of His Person, His work, our status as believers, and the Kingdom.

***Reflect:***

- ✓ ***On the ways Jesus is supreme and the things over which He is supreme.***
- ✓ ***Spend some time worshiping Jesus for His supremacy.***

**NOTES:**

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**Sunday, December 21, 2025**

## **Lesson 3 – “Why did God send Jesus”**

*Printed Text: John 11:1-44; Hebrews 10:1-18*

### **John 11:1-44 KJV (excerpts)**

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was...17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died...35 Jesus wept.36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?.....41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

### **Hebrews 10:1-18 KJV (excerpts)**

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

**Introduction** – The Bible teaches that the Father sent the Son into the world (John 5:37; 6:44, 57; 8:16, 18; 12:49; 20:21; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:14). In other words, God sent Jesus. The Bible also tells us why God sent Jesus into the world—reasons that redound to His glory and our eternal benefit. We will look at five reasons God sent Jesus.

### **I. Why God Sent Jesus: To Reveal the Father**

In creation, we learn some things about the Creator, such as “his eternal power and divine nature” (Romans 1:20). But what is God really like? Is it possible to know Him personally? In the Old Testament, God began to reveal Himself as the Creator, Lawgiver, Judge, and Redeemer of His people. And then came Jesus (Hebrews 1:1–2). Jesus revealed God in a way that really caught our attention.

Without Jesus, we would not be able to see God. “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known” (John 1:18). Jesus is, in fact, “the exact representation and perfect imprint of His [Father’s] essence” (Hebrews 1:3, AMP). That is, if you’ve seen Jesus, you’ve seen the Father (John 14:9).

Without Jesus, we would doubt God’s love. But in the works that He did and the death that He died, Jesus revealed God’s love (Romans 5:8). Without Jesus, we would question God’s goodness and care. But Jesus revealed God’s knowledge of our needs and His desire to meet them (Matthew 6:8). Without Jesus, we might consider God unfair. But in His interactions with people of all backgrounds, Jesus revealed God’s impartiality.

**John 11:1-44 KJV** (excerpts) See text above

- ***What do we learn about God through Jesus' interactions in this chapter?***

Without Jesus, we would be forever fatherless. But Jesus showed us that we can approach God as a child approaches his or her father (see Matthew 6:9). There's a relationship not just based on creation, the law, or judgment; there is a family relationship (see Matthew 12:49–50). Jesus spoke God's words, thought God's thoughts, felt and expressed God's emotions, and did God's works. God sent Jesus into the world to reveal the Father to us.

- ***Is the truth of God as Father difficult or comforting for you?***
- ***How does understanding that Jesus reflects our perfect, heavenly Father impact the way you approach Him?***

## **II. Why God Sent Jesus: To Do Away with Sin**

Hebrews 9:26 says, "He has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself."

The sacrifices of the old Levitical system were insufficient to take away sin. But Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice, once for all time. With the shedding of His blood on the cross, never again would animals need to die as our substitute. When God sent Jesus into the world, the Son of God took on human flesh and provided a better sacrifice for sin and a better covenant with God's people.

**Hebrews 10:1-18 KJV** (excerpts) See text above

- ***What do these verses reveal about our sin and the role of the sacrificial system?***

God sent Jesus not to deny the fact of sin or help us forget about our sin. Denials and cover-ups were not His purpose. God wanted to do away with sin once and for all. In Christ, God forgave sin and released us from its penalty.

Through faith in the Son, we have full deliverance from guilt. Not only that, but we have deliverance from the hold of sin itself, true salvation, and real peace with God. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

Our religious actions cannot put away sin. Neither can feeling sorry, practicing self-denial, or holy living. Not even our death can get rid of sin. Sin is a blot on our soul, a stain in the fabric of our being that can only be washed away by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Jesus alone can put away our sin (1 Peter 2:24). It's one of the reasons God sent Him.

- ***In what ways do people seek freedom from guilt of sin without Christ? Why can none of those things cleanse (or free) us from our sin?***

## **III. Why God Sent Jesus: To Destroy the Works of the Devil**

Another biblical reason that God sent Jesus into the world is spelled out in 1 John 3:8: "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." It was a divine mission, executed with the precision of a well-planned military strike. Two thousand years ago, the Son of God landed on foreign soil, behind enemy lines, with a mission to demolish something, and He succeeded in His objective. He wrecked all that the devil had been doing.

The devil has been working to build a kingdom for himself, and Jesus came to dissolve the framework, making everything Satan has ever done a worthless waste of time. The devil had made his sand castle, and Jesus was the tide.

The devil's works that Jesus destroyed include deception (Jesus is the Truth); sin (Jesus is our Righteousness); and death (Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life). Jesus accomplished His wrecking of Satan's work by the fact of His holiness (Matthew 4:1–11; John 14:30), the excellence of His sacrifice (John 12:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14–15; 1 John 2:2), and the action of His grace

(Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 3:4; Romans 16:20).

The devil had a plan for Lazarus, and it did not involve his being resurrected from the dead (John 11). The devil had a plan for Saul of Tarsus, and it did not include his becoming a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 9). The devil had a plan for the Philippian jailer, and it did not include living through the night and being saved and baptized with his entire family (Acts 16). Satan's plans have gone awry, and they will continue to as God's will is accomplished in and through us. As for the devil's future, he will eventually be sent to the place of torture he dreads (Matthew 8:28–29; Revelation 20:10).

According to John 10:10, the devil wants only to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus has come to give us life abundantly.

- ***When have you experienced the abundant life found in Christ?***
- ***Where have you seen the devil's destruction?***

#### **IV. Why God Sent Jesus: To Provide an Example of a Holy Life**

In the context of suffering for righteousness' sake, Peter tells us that Christ has left us "an example, that [we] should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). All those who follow Christ ought to conduct themselves just as Jesus conducted Himself (1 John 2:6). We are to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16), and Jesus is our example. Jesus handled temptation, and He did so without sin (Luke 4:1–13; Hebrews 4:15). Jesus lived blamelessly, being holy in word (John 8:45–46) and holy in deed (1 Peter 2:22; Hebrews 7:26). Jesus nurtured a prayer life (Luke 5:16), and He relied on the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14).

- ***How is Jesus the example you follow in your life?***
- ***In which areas are you seeking to be more like Him?***

God sent Jesus into the world, and we praise Him for it. We are eternally grateful to our Lord

who, at the end of His ministry, was able to look to heaven and say, "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work."

#### **Reflection: Think about where you would be if it were not for Jesus' mission.**

- ✓ *What impact would there be on salvation and on your life personally?*
- ✓ *Thank Jesus for accomplishing the mission we could not do ourselves.*

#### **V. Why God Sent Jesus: to Give Us Peace**

*"Our Heavenly Father Sent Jesus to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days...to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." Luke 1:74-79*

#### **Reflection Prayer...**

Heavenly Father, I thank you for sending Jesus to rescue me from the hand of my enemies. Thank you for providing a way for me – and all of us who choose Jesus – to have Peace with You, Peace with Ourselves and Peace with Others. Thank you, Father, for sending Jesus.

*Close in prayer...*



**NOTES:**

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.





**Sunday, December 28, 2025**

## **Lesson 4 – What Does it Mean, “Jesus is God with Us”**

*Printed Text: Exodus 40; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Romans 8:11; Galatians 2:20*

### **Exodus 40 KJV (excerpts)**

1 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail. 4 And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. 5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. 6 And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 7 And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. 8 And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate. 9 And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. 10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. 11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. 12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: 15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. 16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he... 34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38 For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

### **1 Corinthians 3:16 KJV**

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

### **2 Corinthians 6:14-18 KJV**

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

### **Romans 8:11 KJV**

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

### **Galatians 2:20 KJV**

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

## **Introduction**

Before the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to Joseph and revealed that his fiancée, Mary, had conceived a child through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20–21). Mary would give birth to a Son, and they were to name Him Jesus. Then Matthew, quoting from Isaiah 7:14, provided this inspired revelation: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’

(which means ‘God with us’)” (Matthew 1:22–23).

Seven hundred years earlier, the prophet Isaiah foresaw the virgin birth of the promised Messiah. He prophesied that His name would be Immanuel, which means “God with us.” By referencing the words of Isaiah, Matthew recognized Jesus as Immanuel. The name Immanuel expresses the miracle of the Incarnation: Jesus is God with us! God had been with His people always—in the pillar of cloud above the tabernacle, in the voice of the prophets, in the ark of the covenant—but never was God so clearly present with His people as He was through His virgin-born Son, Jesus, the Messiah of Israel.

#### **Question to ponder...**

- *When you think about the incarnation, how does Jesus becoming flesh encourage you?*

In the Old Testament, the presence of God with His people was most evident when His glory filled the tabernacle (Exodus 25:8; 40:34–35) and the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11). But that glory was far surpassed by the personal presence of God the Son, God with us in person.

Perhaps the most significant passage in the Bible on the Incarnation of Jesus is John 1:1–14. John states that “the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” (verses 1–2, CSB). John uses the term *logos*, or “the Word,” as a clear reference to God. John declares in verse 14, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

On the night of His arrest, Jesus was teaching His disciples. Philip had a request: “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” It was a perfectly natural yearning. But Jesus replied, “Philip, I have been with you all this time, and still you do not know Me? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:8–9, BSB). Jesus had been showing them the Father all along. He was truly “God with us.”

Whenever Jesus spoke, He spoke the Father’s words. Whatever Jesus did, He did exactly as the Father would do.

- ***Knowing that Jesus reflects the Father, which parable, teaching, interaction, or action of Jesus is particularly insightful to you in revealing God the Father? What does it reveal about God?***

God took upon Himself human flesh and blood (1 Timothy 3:16). This is the meaning of incarnation. The Son of God literally “tabernacled” among us as one of us; He “set up His tent” in our camp (John 1:14). God showed us His glory and offered us His grace and truth. Under the Old Covenant, the tabernacle represented the presence of God, but now, under the New Covenant, Jesus Christ is God with us. He is not merely a symbol of God with us; Jesus is God with us in person. Jesus is not a partial revelation of God; He is God with us in all His fullness: “For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body” (Colossians 2:9, NLT).

God makes Himself fully known to us through Jesus Christ. He reveals Himself as our Redeemer (1 Peter 1:18–19). Jesus is God with us as Reconciler. Once we were separated from God through sin (Isaiah 59:2), but 18 when Jesus Christ came, He brought God to us: “For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them” (2 Corinthians 5:19, NLT; see also Romans 8:3).

Jesus is not only God with us but also God in us. God comes to live in us through Jesus Christ when we are born again: “My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, NLT). The Spirit of God lives in us, and we are His dwelling place: “For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: ‘I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people’” (2 Corinthians 6:16, NLT).

***Exodus 40 KJV (excerpts) See Above***

- ***Where is God's Spirit seen in the tabernacle?***

According to 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Romans 8:11, and Galatians 2:20...

**1 Corinthians 3:16 KJV**

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

**2 Corinthians 6:14-18 KJV**

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

**Romans 8:11 KJV**

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

**Galatians 2:20 KJV**

20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

- ***What similarities and differences are there in God's Spirit filling the tabernacle and His Spirit living within us?***

Jesus is not God with us temporarily, but eternally. God the Son, never ceasing for a moment to be divine, took on a fully human nature and became 'God with us' forever: "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20; see also Hebrews 13:5). When it was time for Jesus to return to the

Father, He told His disciples, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever" (John 14:16, ESV). Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, who would continue to bring the presence of God to dwell in the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit carries on the role of Jesus as teacher, revealer of truth, encourager, comforter, intercessor, and God with us.

Jesus came to earth to be God with us. He was the perfect human reflection of God the Father. Jesus died and rose again so God could also be God within us. Believers are a reflection of God as His Spirit lives within us and transforms us.

**Reflection Questions**

- ✓ *How are you reflecting God with your life?*
- ✓ *How would you like your life to reflect God so you can impact those around you?*

*Close in prayer...*

# NOTES:



**Sunday, January 4, 2026**

## **Lesson 5 - "What is the Church"**

Printed Text: *Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 12:14-26; Ephesians 4:11-16; 22-27; Hebrews 10:23-25*

### **Introduction**

Many people today understand the church as a building. This is not a biblical understanding of the church. The word "church" is a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is defined as "an assembly" or "called-out ones." The root meaning of church is not that of a building, but of people. It is ironic that when you ask people what church they attend, they usually identify a building. Romans 16:5 says, "Greet the church that is in their house." Paul refers to the church in their house—not a church building, but a body of believe

### **Questions to ponder...**

- *How do you define a church? What components make a church what it is?*
- *How does thinking of the church as a people rather than a building change the impact and importance of church?*

#### ***Acts 2:42-47 KJV***

*42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

#### ***1 Corinthians 12:14-26 KJV***

*14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

The church is the body of Christ, of which He is the head. Ephesians 1:22–23 says, "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way." The body of Christ is made up of all believers in Jesus Christ from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until Christ's return. Biblically, we may regard the church in two ways, as the universal church or as the local church.



The universal church consists of everyone, everywhere, who has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body— whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13). This verse says that anyone who believes is part of the body of Christ and has received the Spirit of Christ as evidence. All those who have received salvation through faith in Jesus Christ comprise the universal church.

- **How do you view someone who claims to be a believer, but is not part of a local church?**
- **What about another believer who is not a part of your local church?**
- **How would seeing these believers as your brothers and sisters within the universal church impact the way you interact with them?**

The local church is described in Galatians 1:1–2: “Paul, an apostle . . . and all the brothers and sisters with me, to the churches in Galatia.” Here we see that in the province of Galatia there were many churches—they had a localized ministry and were scattered throughout the province. They were local churches. A Baptist church, a Lutheran church, an E-Free church, etc., is not the church, as in the universal church; rather, it is a local church, a local body of believers. The universal church is comprised of everyone who belongs to Christ. Members of the universal church should seek fellowship and edification in a local church.

- **After reading the following verses, discuss how church attendance should impact your faith and how you live it out?**

#### ***Ephesians 4:11-16; 22-27 KJV***

*11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love..... the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.*

#### ***Hebrews 10:23-25 KJV***

*23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

**Conclusion—**The church is not a building or a denomination. According to the Bible, the church is the body of Christ—all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Local churches are gatherings of people who claim the name of Christ. Members of a local church may or may not be members of the universal church, depending on the

genuineness of their faith. The local church is where believers can fully apply the “body” principles of 1 Corinthians chapter 12—encouraging, teaching, and building one another up in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection Questions**

- ✓ *In what ways has the local church helped you grow in your faith?*
- ✓ *Have you thanked God for your local body of believers as well as the universal church?*
- ✓ *Have you encouraged or edified someone in your local church this week?*

*Close in prayer...*

A decorative graphic with the text "Happy New Year 2026" in a cursive script, flanked by elegant flourishes.

**NOTES:**

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## Sunday, January 11, 2026

### Lesson 6 - "Is The Supposed to be only One Church" (Part I)

*Printed Text: Romans 5:6-12; 19-21; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:27*

#### Introduction

The word translated "church" in the New Testament is *ekklesia*, which literally means "those who are called out." In one sense, the church is the group of people that God has called unto Himself from everywhere and from all time. In this sense, there is only one church—one body of believers that God has called unto Himself—believers both living and dead in any part of the world.

#### Questions to ponder...

- What unites the *ekklesia*?
- What is true of all churches?

#### ***Romans 5:6-12; 19-21***

*6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. 12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..... 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

#### ***1 Corinthians 10:16-17***

*16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

#### ***1 Corinthians 12:27***

*27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

- ***What do the previous verses reveal about what unites the church?***

The New Testament also uses the word churches (plural) as in "the churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house" (1 Corinthians 16:19) and "he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches" (Acts 15:41). Here the word refers to local bodies of believers meeting in a particular location. In this sense, there are many churches.

One way to understand the two uses of the word church is that there is only one church—one body of people called unto God. However, there are local manifestations of that body in different places, and these are called "churches." When speaking of the church, people often speak of the universal church and the local church, or sometimes the invisible church and the visible church. (The universal church is "invisible" in that it never meets all together and no one can observe it in the way that they can observe a local church.)

In one sense, there is only one church, the Body of Christ. In another sense, there are

many local manifestations of that body, which are also called “churches.” Each local church may have unique features due to the part of the world it is in or the people who comprise it, just as each McDonald’s restaurant may have a different layout and seating arrangement, and a McDonald’s in Central America or Hong Kong will have some different menu items than the standard McDonald’s in the United States. This concept is relatively easy to understand and is not controversial.

If all local churches were in complete agreement with each other, with only minor variations in style and emphasis, then there would probably be no confusion. As it is, there is much disparity in the practice and teachings of various churches (and local organizations that call themselves “churches”), so the question arises: isn’t there supposed to be only one church?

- ***In what sense is there only one church?***
- ***What does the diversity of beliefs, people, and types of local churches reveal about God and people?***
- ***How does that diversity work within the unity of the universal church?***

Some local churches are independent, which means there is no human board or organization that regulates what they do. They follow the New Testament as they understand it and answer directly to Christ. Other local churches are part of a larger church (or denomination) that exercises control over that individual, local church. The problem arises when one local church or denomination believes and/or practices something entirely different from another church, yet they both claim to be following the teaching of the New Testament and claim to be committed to the lordship of Christ. Obviously, this is a problem and has been from the earliest days of Christianity.

- ***What unites the local churches under the universal church?***

When Jesus ascended into heaven, He left apostles who exercised authority in the church.

These men spoke directly for God and were largely responsible for the production of the New Testament. However, even in the earliest days, others challenged the authority of the apostles.

Paul was constantly struggling against men who followed him around trying to disrupt his work. After he established a church in a city and moved on to another city, these men would come in after him and say that his teaching was incorrect or incomplete or that Paul himself was inadequate. In some cases, the new teaching was so contrary to the truth of the gospel that Paul had to condemn it (and those who propagated it) in the strongest terms (see Galatians 1:6–9).

In other cases, where people in the churches began to identify with one leader over another, Paul cautions that there should be no divisions: “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, ‘I follow Paul’; another, ‘I follow Apollos’; another, ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:10–13)...Thus, even during the days of the apostles, there were divisions springing up in the church.

- ***When is division a good or necessary thing?***

After the apostles passed from the scene, church leaders were responsible for teaching the Bible and maintaining the integrity of the church. However, as in the days of the apostles, there will always be some who will pervert or distort the gospel and gather a following unto themselves, claiming to be teaching truth. Others may teach the truth but do it in such a way that they gather a following based on their own personality and leadership technique. But distortions of the gospel are not

the only reasons why different denominations or local churches exist.

Churches have also formed because of stylistic, cultural, or other non-doctrinal differences. This has given rise to the multitude of local churches and denominations that we have today. Most say they are following Jesus Christ and the teachings of the New Testament, but all of them cannot be right. And, unfortunately, some today have abandoned all but a pretense of following Christ or of conforming to the New Testament. When is division a good or necessary thing?

Churches are made up of sinful people who change over time. Sometimes the people within a local church or several churches within a denomination will change their beliefs and want to exit the church or denomination and form a new one that will more accurately reflect their new beliefs. We saw this in the early twentieth century as many denominations abandoned a belief in the Bible as authoritative. Individual churches left these “liberal” or “modernist” denominations and started new “fundamentalist” ones. More recently, as many mainline churches have started to normalize homosexual behavior and ordain women, individuals and churches have withdrawn to join or form churches in line with more biblical beliefs.

*To be continued...Close in prayer*

**NOTES:**

[illegible]



**Sunday, January 18, 2026**

## **Lesson 7 - "Is The Supposed to be Only One Church" (Part II)**

**Printed Text: *John 17:1-11;17-23 KJV***

### **Question to ponder...**

- "How do we determine which churches are true, biblical churches?"

#### ***John 17:1-11;17-23 KJV***

*1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. 6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. 11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. .... 17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

### **CHURCH DIFFERENCES**

Because of the variety of beliefs and interpretations of the New Testament, it is inevitable that different churches and denominations will form. It may be impossible for an individual to find a church that perfectly aligns with his or her beliefs. Likewise, a church may be in a denomination that does not perfectly reflect the views of the membership. Each individual and each church must decide, based on their own study of God's Word, which issues are of critical importance and which issues can be compromised for the sake of fellowship.

- ***What issues would you say are of critical importance to stand firm on and why?***
- ***How did you come to your conclusions?***

Individual churches and even denominations will often cooperate with other churches and denominations when they have agreement on essential doctrine. For instance, well-known pastors John MacArthur and R.C. Sproul were great friends. They ministered together at conferences and fought side by side in struggles regarding the authority of God's Word and the integrity of the gospel. However, they had significant differences on secondary issues such as baptism and the end times. They even debated each other on some of these issues. While they would never think of combining their churches, they were still able to fellowship and cooperate with each other in the spirit of Christian love and unity. This is a good example of unity in diversity that should be common among true believers.

## ESSENTIALS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Bible reveals what is essential to the Christian faith. These are the basic doctrinal elements that we should understand and believe if we are followers of Jesus Christ:

**\*The resurrection of Christ.** Perhaps no other event in the Bible is as significant as the resurrection. Without the resurrection of Christ, we are without hope for eternal life: “If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith” (1 Corinthians 15:14). With His resurrection, Christ proved that He had made a satisfactory payment for sin, that His victory over sin and death was literal and complete, and that He has the power to save. The Lord Jesus could not stay in the grave, because, as the Son of God, He has “life in himself” (John 5:26). It’s a life He shares with those who trust and follow Him: “Because I live, you also will live” (John 14:19). God promises a resurrection for all who are in Christ.

**\*The Gospel.** The message of the gospel, or the good news, is that Jesus died for sinners and rose again the third day. Paul spells this out in 1 Corinthians 15:1–4. Paul also warns against false gospels that replace Christ’s work with our own or in some other way lead the unsuspecting away from the cross and empty tomb. “Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God’s curse!” (Galatians 1:8–9). The pure gospel of Jesus Christ—His death on the cross and His resurrection to everlasting life—is an essential of the Christian faith. More than that, “it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

**\*The deity of Christ.** Quite simply, Jesus is God. While Jesus never directly says, “I am God” in Scripture, He makes it clear that He is God in the flesh. Jesus taught, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), and in this way He claimed deity. On occasions when people called Him “God,” Jesus does not deny it. An

example is John 20:28, when Thomas addresses Jesus as “My Lord and my God!” Jesus accepts the title because it is an accurate description of who He is. His resurrection from the dead is one of the main proofs of His deity.

**\*Salvation by grace.** We are all sinners separated from God and deserving of eternal punishment for our sin. Jesus’ death on the cross paid for the sins of mankind—the just died for the unjust (1 Peter 3:18). Because of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf, we can be forgiven and have an eternal relationship with God. God did not have to do this for us—we were unworthy of such love—but He sent His only Son as an act of grace, or undeserved favor. Scripture emphasizes the goodness and grace of God: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8–9). There is nothing we can do to earn God’s favor or gain access to heaven. Salvation is all of grace.

**\*Salvation through Jesus Christ alone.** Some people wonder, “Don’t all roads lead to God?” At least in one sense, all roads *do* lead to God—everyone will face Him in judgment after death. But not everyone will be saved. For most people, the judgment will be a terrible occasion, as they will not know Jesus as their Lord. Those who do not have faith in Christ will have the lake of fire as their final destination. There is only one way to avoid that fate: faith in God’s Son, Jesus Christ (John 3:16–18). Jesus is the only savior: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross is our only remedy for sin. His resurrection is our only hope for eternal life. Jesus’ own words on the matter are quite exclusive: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

**\*Monotheism.** Monotheism is the belief that there is only one God to be worshiped and served, and that belief is an essential of the Christian faith. Monotheism is taught

throughout Scripture, starting with the law (Deuteronomy 6:4) and continuing through the prophets: “This is what the LORD says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6). The New Testament affirms the same truth, and a Christian knows there is only one true God, despite the many wannabes: “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live” (1 Corinthians 8:5–6).

**\*The Holy Trinity.** A doctrine basic to Christianity is that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all the one God. The concept of a “three-in-one” God is not taught in a single verse or passage, but Scripture repeatedly alludes to His triune nature. In Matthew 28:19, all three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” All three Persons of the Trinity are also present at Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:16–17). Christians may not be able to adequately explain the Trinity, but they believe that God is triune.

**\*FAITH.** Any discussion of the basics of Christianity must include a mention of faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6), and so faith is one of the essentials. As Christians we trust in a God we cannot see. We yearn for a home we’ve never been to. We place confidence in outcomes that defy all odds. And we would choose death over giving up any of the above essentials.

***How have you experienced unity in the midst of diversity in the church?***

All evangelical churches agree on certain core teachings such as the Trinity, the authority of Scripture, and justification by grace through faith. Many evangelical Baptist, Independent, and Presbyterian churches cooperate with each other in various ministry endeavors.

However, they could probably never combine and become one church because it would be impossible to accommodate the various secondary beliefs. Most Baptist churches believe in congregational rule, whereas Presbyterian churches believe that elders should make the final decisions. You cannot have both systems of church government in the same church. Likewise, Baptists believe that baptism is for believers who have consciously chosen to be baptized as a sign of their faith in Christ, whereas Presbyterians believe in infant baptism as a sign of the faith of the parents. You might have one church that says they will do either one, but you cannot have one church that says infants should be baptized and at the same time says they should not. So different churches are inevitable and even in a sense necessary to keep the peace.

Ideally, there should only be one church; however, we do not live in an ideal world. We live in a fallen world, and people are sinful. Some will purposefully try to distort the Word of God and mislead people, yet still call their organizations a “church.” Some have abandoned the Word of God as their authority in favor of modern ideas about “human flourishing”, but still maintain the word church in their names. Some are sincere, but mistaken about their interpretation of God’s Word on secondary issues.

No church is perfect. Yet all churches that teach God’s Word and live out the gospel are part of His universal church. God uses the diversity found in local churches to reflect His character and the gospel to the world. It is important for individual Christians to join churches where the Bible is the authority, and it is important for individual evangelical churches or denominations to cooperate so that division over secondary issues remains truly secondary. All true believers in Jesus Christ and all churches that preach and teach the gospel are united by much more than what divides them.

**Reflect on what unites the universal church and local churches.**

- ✓ In what ways is God calling you to personally promote unity in the midst of diversity in your local church and/or the universal church?

*Close in prayer...*



[illegible]



**Sunday, January 25, 2026**

## **Lesson 8 - "What is the Purpose of the Church?"**

*Printed Text: Acts 2:42; John 14:26; 1 John 3:11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8*

### **Acts 2:42 KJV**

*42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*

### **Introduction**

Acts 2:42 could be considered a purpose statement for the church: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." According to this verse, the purposes/activities of the church should be 1) teaching biblical doctrine, 2) providing a place of fellowship for believers, 3) observing the Lord's supper, and 4) praying.

### **Questions to ponder...**

- To what extent are you participating in these four purposes of the church?
- How are each of these currently helping you grow in your faith and in relationship with other believers?

### **TEACHING BIBLICAL DOCTRINE**

### **John 14:26 KJV**

*26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

The church is to teach biblical doctrine so we can be grounded in our faith. Ephesians 4:14 tells us, "Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming."

- ***How are you partnering with the Holy Spirit, yet assuming responsibility for taking something to heart each week from the biblical teaching you receive at your church?***

### **PROMOTING FELLOWSHIP**

The church is to be a place of fellowship, where Christians can be devoted to one another and honor one another (Romans 12:10), instruct one another (Romans 15:14), be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32), encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11), and most importantly, love one another (1 John 3:11).

### **1 John 3:11 KJV**

*11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.*

- ***How are believers called to live and relate with "one another"?***

Around fifty times in the New Testament, Jesus and the apostles tell us to feel, say, or do something to "one another." We are to care for one another and bear with one another, honor one another and sing to one another, do good to one another, and forgive one another. And then there is the grand, overarching, most-repeated one-another, the command that "binds everything together in perfect harmony" ([Colossians 3:14](#)): "Love one another."

- ❖ Reference scriptures: Romans 12:10; Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:2, 32; Ephesians 4:15; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:13-14; 1

Thessalonians 5:11; James 5:16;  
1 Peter 4:10; 1 John 3:11

## OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER

### 1 Corinthians 11:23-30 KJV

*<sup>23</sup> For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:*

*<sup>24</sup> And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*<sup>25</sup> After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

*<sup>26</sup> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

*<sup>27</sup> Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

*<sup>28</sup> But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

*<sup>29</sup> For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

*<sup>30</sup> For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

The church is to be a place where believers can observe the Lord's Supper, remembering Christ's death and shed blood on our behalf (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The concept of "breaking bread" (Acts 2:42) also carries the idea of having meals together. This is another example of the church promoting fellowship.

## PRAYING

The final purpose of the church, according to Acts 2:42, is prayer. The church is to be a place that promotes prayer, teaches prayer, and practices prayer. Philipians 4:6-7 encourages us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- *In what ways is corporate prayer different from praying alone?*

## PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF SALVATION

Another commission given to the church is proclaiming the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). The church is called to be faithful in sharing the gospel through word and deed. The church is to be a "lighthouse" in the community, pointing people toward our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church is to both promote the gospel and prepare its members to proclaim the gospel (1 Peter 3:15). The following scriptures express the gospel message the church is to proclaim:

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

*1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

## HELPING THOSE IN NEED

Some final purposes of the church are given in James 1:27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." The church is to be about the business of ministering to those in need. This includes not only sharing the gospel, but also providing for physical needs (food, clothing, shelter) as necessary and appropriate. The church is also to equip believers in Christ with the tools they need to overcome sin and remain free from the

pollution of the world. This is done by biblical teaching and Christian fellowship.

So, what is the purpose of the church? Paul gave an excellent illustration to the believers in Corinth. The church is God's hands, mouth, and feet in this world— the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). We are to be doing the things that Jesus Christ would do if He were here physically on the earth. The church is to be "Christian," "Christ-like," and Christ-following.

### Reflection Question

- ✓ How are you contributing to living out the purposes of the church?
  - This week, focus on one area of the purpose of the church where you would like to see more involvement or growth, and ask God to show you how you can better be the hands, mouth, and feet of Jesus.

*Close in prayer...*

**NOTES:**

[illegible]



**Sunday, February 1, 2026**

## **Lesson 9 - "Why is Going to Church Important"** (Part I)

Printed Text: Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 12:21-27; Ephesians 4:11-13; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28

### **Acts 2:42 KJV**

*42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

### **Introduction**

This verse from the book of Acts paints a beautiful picture of the early Christian community and their devoted way of life. The verse highlights the importance of spiritual growth, communal support, and shared meals in the life of believers by emphasizing teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.

### **WORSHIP GOD AND LEARN HIS WORD**

Simply put, the Bible tells us we need to attend church so we can worship God with other believers and be taught His Word for our spiritual growth. The early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). We should follow that example of devotion—and to the same things. Back then, they had no designated church building, but "every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46). Wherever the meeting takes place, believers thrive on fellowship with other believers and the teaching of God's Word.

- ✓ ***Why are the four things listed in Acts 2:42 the fundamental ways we grow and thrive as believers?***

Let's ask ourselves: How can we prioritize teaching and learning in our faith journey as we study this verse? How can we strengthen our relationships with others through fellowship and shared meals? And how can we deepen our connection with God through prayer, both individually and corporately? Let's take

inspiration from the early Christians and strive to cultivate a rich and meaningful spiritual life characterized by these key principles.

Church attendance is not just a "good suggestion"; it is God's will for believers. Hebrews 10:25 says we should "not [be] giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Even in the early church, some were falling into the bad habit of not meeting with other believers. The author of Hebrews says that's not the way to go. We need the encouragement that church attendance affords. And the approach of the end times should prompt us to be even more devoted to going to church.

- ✓ ***How should an eternal perspective that "the Day is approaching" encourage believers to continue meeting together?***

Church is the place where believers can love one another (1 John 4:12), encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13), "spur" one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24), serve one another (Galatians 5:13), instruct one another (Romans 15:14), honor one another (Romans 12:10), and be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32).

- ✓ ***How do you practically live out these "one another" commands within your church?***

- ✓
  - ❖ Love one another
  - ❖ Encourage one another
  - ❖ Spur one another to love and good works
  - ❖ Serve one another
  - ❖ Instruct one another
  - ❖ Honor one another
  - ❖ Be kind and compassionate to one another

## THE BODY OF CHRIST

### **1 Corinthians 12:21-27 KJV**

*21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

When a person trusts Jesus Christ for salvation, he or she is made a member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). For a church body to function properly, all of its “body parts” need to be present and working (1 Corinthians 12:14–20). It’s not enough to just attend a church; we should be involved in some type of ministry to others, using the spiritual gifts God has given us (Ephesians 4:11–13). A believer will never reach full spiritual maturity without having that outlet for his gifts, and we all need the assistance and encouragement of other believers (1 Corinthians 12:21–26).

### **Ephesians 4:11-13 KJV**

*11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

- **Why is it not wise or biblical to be a lone Christian?**
- **What benefits are there in being in community with other believers?**  
(Give Scriptures or examples to back up your answer.)

## SPIRITUAL GIFTS

### **Romans 12:6-8 KJV**

*6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

### **1 Corinthians 12:4-11 KJV**

*4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

- **Which of these gifts describe your passions or abilities?**
- **In what ways have you noticed these gifts in use recently? If you do not know what your spiritual gift is, spend some time praying that God would show you.**

For these reasons and more, church attendance, participation, and fellowship should be regular aspects of a believer’s life. Weekly church attendance is in no sense “required” for believers, but someone who belongs to Christ should have a desire to worship God, receive His Word, and fellowship with other believers. Jesus is the Cornerstone of the Church (1 Peter 2:6), and we are “like living stones . . . being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). As the building materials of God’s “spiritual house,” we naturally have a connection with one another, and that

connection is evident every time the Church “goes to church.”

**Reflect in Prayer...**

Thank God for the specific ways He has built the church to function as a body. Thank Him also for the ways that He has equipped you and

other believers to fit within the body. If you do not know where to serve, pray and ask God to show you what needs exist (talk to your pastor if you do not know), what spiritual gifts He has given you, and where you can serve with godly attitudes that encourage the body of Christ and help it thrive.





**Sunday, February 8, 2026**

## **Lesson 10 - "How Should Conflict in the Church be Handled"**

**(Part I)**

Printed Text: 1 Corinthians 5; Matthew 18:15-17; Matthew 7:1-6; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

### **1 Corinthians 5 KJV**

*5 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.<sup>2</sup> And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.<sup>3</sup> For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, <sup>4</sup> In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>5</sup> To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.<sup>6</sup> Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?<sup>7</sup> Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:<sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.<sup>9</sup> I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:<sup>10</sup> Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.<sup>11</sup> But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.<sup>12</sup> For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?<sup>13</sup> But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

### **Matthew 18:15-17 KJV**

*15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.<sup>17</sup> And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are many areas of a church where conflict can develop. However, most of them tend to fall under one of three categories: conflict due to blatant sin among believers, conflict with leadership, conflict between believers. Admittedly, many issues can cross over and actually involve two or more of these categories.

### **Questions to ponder...**

- *When have you seen church conflict handled well?*
- *Why is handling conflict so difficult, especially in the church?*

### **CHURCH CONFLICT**

Believers who blatantly sin pose a conflict for the church as described in 1 Corinthians 5. The church that does not deal with sin among the members will open the door to more problems. The church is not called to be judgmental of unbelievers, but the church is expected to confront and restore believers who are unrepentant of sins such as those listed in 1 Corinthians 5:11: "... anyone who claims to be a brother or sister, but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler." Such individuals are not to be accepted by the church until they are willing to repent. Matthew 18:15-17 provides a concise procedure for the confrontation and restoration of a believer. Confrontation should be done carefully, meekly, and with the goal of restoration (Galatians 6:1). Churches that lovingly discipline sinning individuals will curtail a great deal of conflict in the church.

### **HOWEVER...**

### **Matthew 7:1-6 KJV**

*<sup>1</sup> Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

<sup>2</sup>For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

<sup>3</sup>And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

<sup>4</sup>Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

<sup>5</sup>Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

<sup>6</sup>Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

*1 Corinthians 4:1-5 KJV*

*1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

*3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. 4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.*

*5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

- ***What role does judgment play in the lives of believers (as opposed to unbelievers)?***
- ***What does this look like practically?***

## **DEALING WITH CHURCH CONFLICT**

At times believers might not be content with the direction or actions of church leaders. This was the

case early in the history of the church (Acts 6:1-7). Complaints about the lack of care of a certain group in the church were taken up with the leaders. This was remedied, and the church grew (Acts 6:7). The early church used a conflict to improve the ministry. However, when churches do not have a clear process for dealing with such concerns, people tend to create their own platforms. Individuals may begin polling others in the church, get involved in gossip, or even develop a bloc of “concerned people.”

Leadership can help avoid this by leading like selfless, loving shepherds that are examples of servants, rather than ones that lord over others (1 Peter 5:1-3). Those who are frustrated should respect the leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17), be slow to accuse them (1 Timothy 5:19), and speak the truth lovingly to them, not to others about them (Ephesians 4:15). On those occasions when it appears the leader is not responding to the concern, an individual should follow the pattern set down in Matthew 18:15-17 to ensure that there is no confusion as to where each stands.

- ***At what point do issues become worthy of addressing?***
  - ***Which Scriptures led you to your conclusion?***

*Close in prayer...*

**NOTES:**

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**Sunday, February 15, 2026**

## **Lesson 11 - "How Should Conflict in the Church Be Handled?"**

**(Part II)**

Printed Text: **Romans 12:18; Colossians 3:12-15; Philippians 2:1-9**

### **Questions to ponder...**

- *What is your response to conflict?*
  - *If you are repelled to conflict, how could seeing the benefits of handling conflict humbly, lovingly, and biblically allow you to accept and deal with it when it arises?*
  - *If you engage easily in conflict, where do you need to surrender your wants, attitudes, and justifications for the growth, unity, and benefit of the church as a whole?*

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The Bible warns that people in church may have difficulties with conflict. Some conflict is due to pride and selfishness (James 4:1-10). Some conflicts come about because of offenses that have not been forgiven (Matthew 18:15-35). God has told us to press toward peace (Romans 12:18; Colossians 3:12-15). It is the responsibility of each believer to seek to resolve a conflict.

#### ***Romans 12:18 KJV***

*18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

#### ***Colossians 3:12-15 KJV***

*12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

- **How can dealing with issues in the church (doctrine, unmet needs, ungodly practices or patterns, etc.) or interpersonal conflict benefit and strengthen a church?**

### **STEPS TO BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Develop the proper heart attitude - Meek (Galatians 6:1); Humble (James 4:10); Forgiving (Ephesians 4:31, 32); Patient (James 1:19, 20).
2. Evaluate your part in the conflict - Matthew 7:1-5 (removing the log from your own eye first is necessary before helping others).
3. Go to the individual (not to others) to voice your concern - Matthew 18:15. This is best done in love (Ephesians 4:15) and not to just get something off your chest.
  - a. Accusing the person tends to encourage defensiveness. Therefore, attack the problem rather than the person.
  - b. This gives the person a better opportunity to clarify the situation or to seek forgiveness for the offense.
4. If the first attempt does not accomplish the needed results, continue with another person or persons that can help with mediation (Matthew 18:16).
  - a. Remember that your goal is not to win an argument; it is to win your fellow believer to reconciliation.
  - b. Therefore, choose people who can help you resolve the conflict.

- **Think of major conflicts you have had. How were they handled?**
  - **If the above steps were used in the conflict, how did following them impact the outcome?**
  - **If the above steps were not used, how do you think the outcome would have been different if they were?**

Conflict is best handled when individuals prayerfully and humbly focus on loving others, with the intent of restoring relationships. Most issues of conflict should be manageable if the above biblical principles are followed.

## UNITY

The Bible underscores the importance of “unity” and “oneness.” Unity with others is “good” and “pleasant” (Psalm 133:1). Unity is absolutely essential because the church is the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27), and a body cannot be in disunity or disharmony with itself. If disunity occurs, it essentially ceases to be a body and becomes a disjointed group of individuals. Jesus’ plan for His church is people unified in the faith.

The secret to unity begins with how we view ourselves within the body and how we view others. The key verse that addresses this is Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.” Disunity in a church is most often caused when we act selfishly and consider ourselves better than others. Paul goes on to explain further in the following verse: “Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Sadly, churches that experience disunity and are in conflict and turmoil are generally filled with people looking to their own needs, their own desires, and their own ambitions. Such behavior is characteristic of unbelievers, not those with the mind of Christ. Worldliness, not godliness, is the hallmark of the disunified church, as Paul reminded the Corinthians: “You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are

you not acting like mere humans?” (1 Corinthians 3:3).

- **How are we supposed to treat believers?**
- **What results when people are treated this way**

## Philippians 2:1-9

*1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Paul tells us that we are to consider others’ needs before our own. In all modesty, humility and lowliness of mind, we are to “be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2). A church filled with such people cannot help but have peace, unity, and harmony. The truly humble person sees his own faults in light of the perfections of Christ; he does not seek to see the faults of others, but when he does, he speaks the truth in love and desires their sanctification so they will be built up in the image of Christ. He sees his own heart and the corruption that lies hidden there, along with impure motives and evil ambitions. But he does not seek to notice the errors, defects, and follies of others. He sees the depravity of his own heart and hopes charitably in the goodness of others and believes their hearts are purer than his.

Most importantly, as Christians, we are to see one another in the light of the cross. Fellow

Christians are those for whom Christ died a horrible and painful death so that He might exchange His righteous perfection for their sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

- ❖ How can we not extend to them the love, compassion, and grace of our heavenly Father?
- ❖ How can we demean, criticize, and defame those covered with the precious blood of Christ? Were we not slaves to sin when He called us, hopelessly lost, dead in our own transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1)?

But we are now slaves of Christ, slaves to righteousness, and as slaves of the Master, the task before us is not to quarrel and demand our needs be met, but to reflect His grace and love to those who are also His by His mercy. A church full of such people enjoying their “common salvation” will be a true, biblical church unified in, and earnestly contending for, the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3, NKJV).

**Reflection:** At the cross, we are equally humbled, equally loved, and equally reminded of our need for the Savior. We all have different gifts and abilities, but without Christ’s sacrifice, mercy, and grace toward us, we were all equally destined to hell. How does reminding ourselves of our “common salvation” unite us and free us to treat each other the way God calls us?

*Close in prayer...*

**NOTES:**

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**Sunday, February 22, 2026**

## **Lesson 12 - "What is the Value of Having a Church Family"**

Printed Text: **Mark 10:42-45; Galatians 5:14; Galatians 6:6-10; 1 Peter 4:10** Background Scripture: **2**

What is there to becoming like family to other believers? Acts 2:42 could be considered a basic statement of essential church activity: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." The Bible places importance on the church family unit because of these reasons:

**WE STUDY GOD'S WORD TOGETHER** – A church family provides consistent Bible teaching. This often comes through small groups, Bible studies, teaching from the pastor, Sunday school lessons, and so on. The church family is called to grow spiritually together, spurring one another on. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

- ***What is God currently teaching you through the study of His Word, both personally and corporately?***

**WE HONOR GOD TOGETHER THROUGH WORSHIP**—There is a unifying factor when believers worship God together, whether it's through music or preaching or serving. Psalm 34:3 emphasizes a call to corporate worship: "Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together."

- ***How does corporate worship unify the body of Christ?***
- ***How does the call to exalt God together encourage you to be committed to the church body?***

**WE FIND ACCOUNTABILITY** — The church provides a practical framework for accountability. Once relationships grow and friendships form, there is someone to

encourage you, rebuke you when necessary, and rejoice with you. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Accountability is crucially important in the battle to overcome sin, and the church family is a great place to find someone to pray with, talk to, and confide in.

- ***Where could you humble yourself and allow others in the body to provide accountability for you from sin?***

We find support in trial — When trials come, a support system is crucial. When in need, you will want your brothers and sisters in Christ to uphold you in prayer and assist with practical needs like meals, cleaning, and childcare. Galatians 6:2 encourages us to "carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

- ***When have you found support in the body of Christ when you were walking through trials?***

We gain opportunities for service — We not only receive support in the church; we give it as well. Your calling in the church is to contribute, not just to receive. When we are in close fellowship with other believers, we know when they need support and prayer. We can step in and help in practical ways. Galatians 6:10 says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

### **Mark 10:42-45**

*42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon*



*them.<sup>43</sup> But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:<sup>44</sup> And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

### ***Galatians 5:14***

*14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

### ***Galatians 6:6-10***

*6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.<sup>7</sup> Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.<sup>8</sup> For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.<sup>9</sup> And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

*10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

### ***1 Peter 4:10***

*10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

**WE MAKE DISCIPLES** – There comes a time when we need to learn to feed, not just be fed (Hebrews 5:12). We can evangelize, teach, encourage, and “disciple” our church family. “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

- **As we discussed in a previous lesson, who is discipling you and whom are you discipling?**
- **How could you be more intentional with the discipling relationships in your life?**

In an age when the culture is increasingly secular, it is beneficial to be in a family of like-minded believers. These brothers and sisters can encourage you in your faith journey, respond to your questions about spiritual issues, and be a support in times of hardship. The church family can also give you opportunity to serve and disciple others. “Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24–25).

### **Reflections**

Now that you have studied several lessons on questions about the church, take some time to reflect on what you’ve learned and how you will put what you’ve learned into practice.

- ✓ *How has your understanding of the church changed or expanded as a result of what you’ve learned through this study?*
- ✓ *What will you change in your life as a result of this study?*
- ✓ *If you are not part of a church family, what from this study has challenged or motivated you to become a part of one?*
- ✓ *If you are in a church family, praise God for the believers and leaders He has given you!*
  - *Praise Him for how the body has encouraged you, motivated you, disciplined you, reminded you of what is true, and helped you grow. Ask God to give you a renewed commitment to and love for the body of believers in which He has placed you.*
- ✓ *If your church family is unhealthy, pray. Ask God to show you how He is calling you to act and how you can be part of the solution.*
  - *Who in your life needs to be encouraged by renewed commitment to the body of Christ?*
  - *What will you do as a result of your renewed commitment to*

*those in the local and universal  
church?*

*Close in prayer...*

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