


Outline - Lesson 11



OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

MEMORY WORK TERMS & APPLICATION: PAGE 60

Terms & Application

❖ “Imprint On The Mind” ❖
(Memory Work)

Lord’s Supper IV

℞ “Understanding Before Imprinting” ℞
(Defining Terms)

Fasting- _____

Bodily - _____

Training - _____

Worthy - _____

Doubts - _____

📁 “In Simple Terms” 📁
(In Your Own Words)

⌚ **“Using What You Know”** ⌚
(Applying It To Life)

Name two things you can do to prepare yourself to receive the Lord’s Supper:

What happens if you doubt that Christ’s body and blood forgive your sins:

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

As you speak the words of the Second Article, what are two things you believe?

What are two things you can do in response to what you believe?

What do you know about Jesus as true man?

What are two things you gain by believing Jesus is true God and true man?

What does Christ do as your Priest?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Last week as we continued our discussion of the Second Article, we talked briefly about the basic words we speak in the Second Article. Then, we spent the remainder of our time focusing on Christ as true God and true man and His office of Prophet, Priest, and King. Today, we continue our discussion of the Second Article by looking at the two states or stages of Christ’s life, His state of humiliation and His state of exaltation. As we do, we will learn how these two stages of Christ’s life interact with our lives.

LESSON

When we discuss the life of Christ, we need to include the two stages of Christ’s salvation work. Those two stages or states are His state of humiliation and His state of exaltation.

Christ’s state of humiliation began at His conception and ended with His burial. During that time, Christ humbled Himself; He set aside His full power as God so He could become man and complete His work of salvation for our benefit.

Christ's state of humiliation does not mean He was humiliated. Instead, it refers to that time when Christ willingly humbled Himself, set aside some of His power as God to fulfill the Father's requirements in our place. When Jesus performs His miracles, we see Jesus using His full power as God.

As we think about Jesus humbling Himself, giving up His power as God for us, we need to ask the question, "Why did He need to humble Himself? What did He need to do that we couldn't do?"

Turn to page 61 in your Handouts.

Because I Was Lost

In the explanation to the Second Article, we say, "Who redeemed me a lost and condemned person." Circle the number of each statement below that describes why Jesus humbled Himself for you.

1. Jesus gave up His power for a time because I was on the road to eternal death and hell.
2. Jesus humbled Himself because I wasn't quite able to earn salvation by my own efforts.
3. Jesus set aside His power knowing it was the only way to rescue me from the devil.
4. Jesus humbled Himself because He chose to do it. I didn't need His help.
5. Because I was lost and could never find my way back, Jesus set aside His power to find me and save me.
6. Because I had no interest in God, because I didn't even know God or love God, He chose to humble Himself and to step into my life.
7. Jesus set aside His power as God because He wanted to impress people with His miracles.
8. Jesus set aside His power during His life on earth for the sole purpose of saving me and others who were no better off than I am.
9. Because I was born already condemned to eternal death, Jesus humbled Himself to rescue me from eternal life in hell.
10. Because I was having a difficult time fighting against the devil and all his evil, Jesus was kind enough to humble Himself and help me fight against the devil.
11. Jesus set aside His power because it was the only way He could save me, the only way I could avoid eternal death and hell.
12. Jesus humbled Himself because only He could fulfill the requirements of God.

13. Jesus set aside His power as God because I desperately needed Him to redeem me.

Christ humbled Himself for us, because we needed His work in our place, because we could not save ourselves, because we were lost.

The work Christ accomplished for us during His state of humiliation is called “redemption.” The word “redemption” means to buy back, to rescue, to free us from the power of the devil. The redemptive work of Christ required His death on the cross. Through His death, He paid the price so you and I could live now and in eternity.

Turn to page 62 in your Handouts as we look more carefully at Christ’s work of redemption.

All for Me!

Everything Christ did, He did for you. Draw a star on the line in front of each statement that describes something Jesus did for you as part of His work of redemption.

- _____ 1. As Jesus redeemed me, He pulled me out of eternity in hell and created a mansion for me in heaven.
- _____ 2. As Jesus went to the cross in my place, He paid the price required so that I could live.
- _____ 3. As Jesus redeemed me, He basically told the devil, “This is My child. You no longer have the power to destroy.”
- _____ 4. As Jesus redeemed me, I became a little better than I was before that time.
- _____ 5. Through Jesus’ work of redemption, a night and day change occurred in my life.
- _____ 6. Jesus’s work of redemption changed me from lost and condemned to rescued and loved.
- _____ 7. As Jesus redeemed me, He made it impossible for me to sin.
- _____ 8. As Jesus redeemed me, He gave me the gift of eternal life with Him in heaven.
- _____ 9. As Jesus bought me back from the devil, He enabled me to stand before God knowing I am acceptable in His sight.
- _____ 10. As Jesus died and rose again, He provided forgiveness as the way to deal with my guilt.

- _____ 11. As Jesus redeemed me, He freed me from living a life of sin, from living a life that only served the devil.
- _____ 12. As Jesus redeemed me, He destroyed the devil. Now the devil no longer exists.
- _____ 13. As Jesus redeemed me, I received the power to resist the temptations of the devil.
- _____ 14. As Jesus redeemed me, He gave me a new life, a life of serving God instead of serving the devil.

Everything Christ did as part of His work of redemption, He did for you. Christ may have died for the whole world; He may have redeemed all people, yet what matters most at this moment is knowing He has redeemed you.

Turn to the next page in your Handouts.

Redemption Response

Since Christ's entire work of redemption was for your benefit, what can you do in response to His work? Circle the number of each true statement.

1. Since Christ has redeemed me, I always have the power to resist the devil and all his evil intentions.
2. Because Christ has redeemed me, I no longer need to carry the guilt of my past sins.
3. Knowing Christ has redeemed me, I can live each day to the fullest.
4. Knowing Christ has paid the price for my sins, I choose to ask, "What can I do to serve You today, Lord?"
5. Because Christ has redeemed me, I am free to do what I please. The devil cannot touch me.
6. Since Christ has rescued me from the devil, I choose to do what I can each day to make a difference for Christ.
7. Because I know I'm a redeemed child of God, I offer His love and care to those around me.
8. Because Jesus redeemed me, I look for opportunities to tell others about His work of forgiveness.
9. Since Christ has redeemed me and given me a home in heaven, I enjoy each day as a precious gift given by God.

10. Since Jesus has redeemed me, I choose to be an active participant in worship, to confess my sins, to hear His wonderful words of forgiveness, and to sing my praises.
11. Because of Christ's redemption, I believe I have great value, that I have important talents, that what I have to offer will make a difference.
12. Knowing Christ has rescued me, I look forward to tomorrow as another opportunity to offer Him my thanks by the life I live.
13. Since Jesus has redeemed me, I am prepared to forgive others who hurt me.
14. Since Jesus has redeemed me, I know He will give me the strength to get through my tough days.

Since Jesus has redeemed us, life is incredibly different and that difference leads us to respond with appreciation, with thankfulness, with a life that reflects the value we place on His work for us.

As Jesus completed His work of redemption, as He completed the payment for our sins, His state of humiliation came to a close. As Jesus was laid in the tomb on Good Friday, that period of time in which He set aside His full power as God to redeem us came to an end.

As His state of humiliation ended, His state of exaltation began. His state of exaltation continues to this very day. In His state of exaltation, Jesus now makes full use of His power as God at all times and in all places.

When Jesus descended into hell, He made full use of His power as God by declaring to all those already in hell that He had conquered death and the devil. As He rose on Easter morning, the world saw His full power. His ascension into heaven forty days later and as He sits at the right hand of God continue to demonstrate His full power as God.

Turn to page 64 in your Handouts as we consider what Christ does today because of His state of exaltation, because He is making full use of His power as God.

Full Power Ahead

Circle the number of each true statement.

1. Since Jesus makes full use of His power today, I know He has the power to forgive every mistake I ever make.
2. Since Jesus makes full use of His power, the devil may tempt me, but he can't destroy my faith.
3. Because Jesus uses all His power as God, I know that, with His help, nothing I do is impossible.

4. Since Jesus uses all His power every moment, I know He is still in control even when things seem out of control.
5. Since Jesus makes full use of His power, He will give me a carefree day every day.
6. Since Jesus makes full use of His power, life will always be good for me because I belong to Him.
7. Since Jesus makes full use of His power, I will never face any difficulties.
8. Since Jesus uses all His power as God every day, I will make the most of each day He gives me.
9. Since Jesus makes full use of His power, I will choose an attitude of joy and appreciation instead of an attitude of complaining and grumbling.
10. Because I know Jesus is using His full power, I will ask Him for whatever I need convinced He has the power to provide it.
11. Since Jesus makes full use of His power as God, He can bring me comfort and hope when things look hopeless.
12. Since Jesus makes full use of His power, I know He will protect me and guide me through each day.

Before we end our class time today, we want to discuss the second coming of Christ. Christ's state of exaltation reaches all the way to His second coming, to the end of the world. Yet what do we know about His second coming?

Look at page 65 in your Handouts.

He Will Return

As part of Christ's exaltation, He promises to return on the Last Day, a day unknown to us. Yet there is information we do know about His return. Put a "Y" on the line for each "Yes" statement and an "N" on the line for each "No" statement.

- _____ 1. When Christ returns, He will return in visible form.
- _____ 2. When Christ returns, it will be a great and glorious day for me and all believers.
- _____ 3. When Christ returns, I will face the judgement of God and an eternal outcome that remains unknown until that moment.
- _____ 4. When Jesus returns, He will create a new earth and allow us to live here for a while before He brings this world to an end.

- _____ 5. When Jesus returns, only the unbelievers need to be fearful.
- _____ 6. When Jesus is ready to return, He will tell His people what day He will arrive.
- _____ 7. When Christ returns, He will offer a second chance to those who do not believe.
- _____ 8. When Christ returns, He will give me some time to get my life in order since I am one of His people.
- _____ 9. When Christ returns, everyone on earth will either arrive in heaven or in hell.
- _____ 10. When Christ is preparing to return, there will be signs in the world that give me indications that His return is coming soon.
- _____ 11. When Christ returns, it will occur unexpectedly. Therefore, I need to remain ready for His return at any moment.
- _____ 12. When Christ returns, many will be unprepared.
- _____ 13. When Christ returns, it will be a time of great joy for me and other Christians.
- _____ 14. When Christ returns, the world will realize every truth about God.

Although we don't know when it will occur, the return of Christ will be a glorious day for us and a tragic day for all those who do not have true faith. Therefore, it is of utmost importance every day to remain a true believer, a true believer who is ready for Christ to return at any moment.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

Describe Christ's state of humiliation?

Why did Jesus need to go looking for us?

Name two things Jesus did for you through His redemption.

What are two things you can do in response to Christ's redemption?


Describe three things you know about the return of Christ.

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK


Next week, we will complete our discussion of the Second Article by focusing on our response, on what God expects from us because of all Christ has done in our place.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK



Outline - Lesson 12



OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Define Christ's state of humiliation.

Why did Jesus need to go looking for us?

Name two things Jesus did for you through His redemption.

What are two things you can do in response to Christ's redemption?

What are three things you know about the return of Christ?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Last week as we continued our discussion of the Second Article, we learned about Christ in His stage of humiliation, when He chose to set aside full use of His power as God, and His state of exaltation, that time when He makes full use of His power. Today, we will complete our discussion of the Second Article by focusing on our response, on what God expects from us because of all Christ has done in our place.

LESSON

As we look at the big picture of what Christ has done for us, we could summarize His work with a single word: Redemption. We could simplify that word by using the word "forgiveness." The work of Christ all comes down to Christ redeeming us, Christ forgiving us. If redemption or forgiveness had not occurred, everything else Christ did would have no value.

Before we can consider our response to Christ's redemption, we need to remind ourselves of who we are, of why Christ needed to forgive us. Until we understand our true condition, we will see little value in Christ's work and little need to respond to His work.

Turn to page 66 in your Handouts.

Looking for the Lost

Before we are motivated to respond to Christ's work, we need to realize how lost we really are. On the line preceding each statement, write the word "me" on each line that applies to you.

- _____ 1. I arrived in this world with no interest in God; God was my enemy.
- _____ 2. After my Baptism, I was restored to a perfect relationship with God.
- _____ 3. As long as I ask God to forgive me, all is well between me and God.
- _____ 4. Multiple times every day, I break the heart of God by my words and actions.
- _____ 5. Each Sunday I come to worship, I leave knowing everything is well with God and I am free to live another week.
- _____ 6. The only reason I have the promise of eternal life is because I am a good person.
- _____ 7. I am grateful God still loves those who disappoint Him; otherwise, God would never love me.
- _____ 8. As long as I do my best each day, I know God is happy with me.
- _____ 9. If it weren't for the death of Christ on the cross, I could never have the assurance that I am forgiven by God.
- _____ 10. If I had been the only person on the earth, Jesus would have needed to die for my sins.
- _____ 11. As long as I obey the Ten Commandments as best I can, I know God loves me and will take me to heaven one day.
- _____ 12. Left to myself, there would be only one possible eternal outcome for my life; that outcome would be eternity in hell.
- _____ 13. By doing good deeds, I gain favor in God's sight and earn His forgiveness.
- _____ 14. Without Christ and His work, my life would have no more value than a dandelion growing in the road ditch.
- _____ 15. Nothing I do can or will ever enable me to earn God's forgiveness. It is only possible because Christ earned it and offers it to me.

We may not like to be reminded of reality, yet we are lost on our own. We lack any ability to earn God's favor or His forgiveness. Everything we have at this moment is entirely by the grace of God, because of His love for us.

Having been reminded we are numbered among the lost that only Christ could find and restore to a right relationship with Him, we are now ready to consider our proper response to all Christ has done for us.

Our response is found in the last portion of the explanation of the Second Article, where it begins by saying, "That I may be His own..."

Turn to the next page in your Handouts.

I Belong

Because of Christ, we belong to His family, a family like no other family. Circle the number of each true statement.

1. Because I belong to God's family, I seek to do those things that bring honor to my Father.
2. Because I belong to His family, I enjoy my privilege of talking to my Father whenever I want to talk to Him
3. Because I belong to His family, I choose to go to Him regularly in prayer seeking His guidance and direction for my life.
4. Because I belong to His family, I demonstrate my love to Him by how I treat those around me.
5. Knowing I belong to His family motivates me to show kindness and compassion to others, even those who do not know God as their Father.
6. Since I belong to God's family, I choose to do all I can to get along with other members of my family here on earth.
7. Because I belong to His family, I know I have the freedom to live life however I want to live it.
8. Because I belong to His family, I do my best to follow His Commandments.
9. Knowing I belong to His family, I am patient and understanding of others even when they fail to treat me in the same way.
10. Since I belong to His family, I consider it a great honor and privilege to worship my God, to gather in His house for praise.
11. Since I belong to His family, I do what I can to encourage others to become part of His wonderful family.
12. Because I belong to God's family, I choose to freely forgive others and not hold a grudge against them.

13. Because I belong to His family, I come to Him often asking Him to forgive me and restore my relationship with Him.
14. Because I belong to God's family, I take time daily to thank my Father for His goodness toward me.
15. Because I belong to God's family, I choose to live my life with an attitude of joy and excitement knowing God is working through me each day.

Christ's work of redemption made it possible for us to be part of the family of God. Because we belong to His family, we respond with lives that give evidence of the relationship we have with our God.

As we reflect on our relationship with our God, the relationship obtained by Christ and His forgiveness, we need to consider how we can make a difference for Christ by asking ourselves, "How can I live for Christ?"

Look at page 68 in your Handouts.

Making a Difference

Your life is different today because Christ made it different through His work of redemption. Circle the number of each true statement, of each statement that indicates something you can do as you live for Him.

1. Make the most of each day knowing it is a gift from God
2. Keep a positive attitude, even when things aren't as I would like them to be
3. Show by example that having Christ in my life makes a difference
4. Treat others with value; show them respect
5. Live each moment knowing God has a great plan that He is unfolding in my life
6. Go with the flow without expecting anything significant from God to occur in my day
7. Remind myself each day that God is in control, even when things don't make sense or life doesn't seem fair
8. Take time each day to give God praise and thanks for all He does for me
9. Treat each day as a precious gift from God that needs to be used before it is gone
10. When I receive compliments and praise, I remember to offer that praise to my God for His work through me

11. Keep a smile on my face and in my heart knowing God loves me and will do what is best for me
12. Seek His forgiveness and then live confident I am forgiven
13. Use my talents and gifts to the best of my ability every day
14. Give God honor by gathering regularly to worship Him
15. Show honor and respect to my parents and teachers
16. Offer my best in all I do knowing it's what God expects from me

Living for our God, making a difference for our God, can be done in many different ways. As each new day arrives, God will be waiting for you to make a difference for Him, waiting for you to live each new day to His glory.

As we live life for Christ, we also serve our God. In the explanation of the Second Article, we say, "Serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."

Turn to the next page in your Handouts as we learn ways we can serve our God.

Living to Serve

On the line in front of each true statement, write the word "yes" to indicate what you can do to serve your God as a response to His forgiveness in your life.

- _____ 1. Believe I am forgiven; then act as if God has forgiven and forgotten
- _____ 2. Forgive others and treat them as if it didn't happen
- _____ 3. Watch for opportunities to help others and do what I can for them
- _____ 4. Each new day, consider what I can do to give praise to my God
- _____ 5. Do all I can to resist the temptations around me knowing that is what pleases my God
- _____ 6. Begin each day by saying, "Lord, what can I do today to serve You?"
- _____ 7. Look out for myself because I know no one else will look out for me
- _____ 8. View each new day as a day to serve my God instead of a day to do my own thing
- _____ 9. Anticipate that God will give me opportunities to serve Him tomorrow if I will only look for them

- _____ 10. Offer to help my Mom or Dad with something rather than waiting for them to ask or tell me to help
- _____ 11. Choose to keep my room clean, to do my chores without complaining, and to do what I am told to do without talking back
- _____ 12. Be willing to be inconvenienced at times for the sake of helping someone else in need
- _____ 13. Volunteer for activities at my church and offer to serve in any way that is available
- _____ 14. Choose to be patient, kind, and thoughtful toward others knowing God has been more than thoughtful and caring toward me

Our God has done more than we could ever ask or expect. He willingly gave His Son to forgive us, to pay the price for our sins. Serving Him through every opportunity He provides is the least we can do as our proper response.

When we think about our response to Christ's work, it's easy to think in terms of particular actions, specific things we do that express our appreciation. Yet, our response to Christ's work of redemption needs to extend beyond specific actions. It needs to include actions that occur naturally, actions that might occur in a way we view as somewhat random.

Turn to page 70 in your Handouts.

Random Acts of Kindness

We've all heard of "random acts of kindness." Some of you have probably even done random acts of kindness. Read each statement below. If it is something you could do as a random act of kindness that would express your appreciation for what Christ has done for you, circle the number of that statement.

1. Shovel off your neighbor's sidewalk after it snows
2. Open the door at a restaurant for another couple who are preparing to enter
3. Help someone at school you don't even know when they drop their books in the hallway
4. Open the door for others who are coming to church on Sunday morning
5. Offer to share your notes with someone who missed class the previous day
6. Offer to let someone else go ahead of you in line at McDonalds.
7. Loan someone one of your pencils when they can't find their own

8. Help someone carry their groceries out to their car
9. Offer to buy someone else a pack of gum they are holding in their hand at the mini-mart
10. Get upset because the person you helped yesterday doesn't appear to appreciate it today
11. Offer to return another student's book to the library since you are already going there yourself
12. Invite a new student to join you for lunch when you notice he/she is looking for a place to sit
13. Allow another student to use your cell phone to call their parent to pick them up from school
14. Help another student at school when they are having trouble getting their locker open
15. Do something out of the ordinary that will surprise your parents in a good way
16. Send a get well card to a student you hear is sick, even though you wouldn't know who they were if you saw them at school

Random acts of kindness may appear random to us, yet to God, nothing occurs randomly. As you do what we call "random acts of kindness," you are demonstrating your appreciation to God for all He has done for you. So, whenever you have the opportunity, do a random act of kindness for someone else. Even if you receive no response from them, you can still know God is smiling because you demonstrated your appreciation for His work in your life.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

What proof can you offer that you were numbered among the lost?

What are two things you can do because you know you belong to God's family?

Describe three things you can do to make a difference for Christ?

What are three ways you can serve your God?

Which random act of kindness do you intend to do in the coming week?

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK

In our next lesson, we will begin our discussion of the Third Article as we focus on the work of the Holy Spirit. We will discuss the Trinity, understand that we

cannot come to faith without Him, learn who the Holy Spirit is, and realize the Holy Spirit is always working. We will also learn why many end up in hell even though the Holy Spirit is always working.

Extra credit: For next week, bring a written, one paragraph explanation of who the Holy Spirit is.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK

Outline - Lesson 13

OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

MEMORY WORK TERMS & APPLICATION: PAGE 71

Terms & Application

❖ “Imprint On The Mind” ❖
(Memory Work)

Lord’s Prayer - Intro & 1st Petition

℞ “Understanding Before Imprinting” ℞
(Defining Terms)

Tenderly - _____

Confidence - _____

Hallowed - _____

Purity - _____

Contrary - _____

Profanes - _____

📁 “In Simple Terms” 📁
(In Your Own Words)

⌚ **“Using What You Know”** ⌚
(Applying It To Life)

Since God is your Father and you are His child, how can you talk to God:

What can you do today to keep God’s name holy: _____

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What proof can you offer that you were numbered among the lost?

What are two things you can do because you know you belong to God’s family?

Describe three things you can do to make a difference for Christ?

What are three ways you can serve your God?

LESSON OVERVIEW

As we concluded our discussion of the Second Article last week, we focused on our proper response to all Christ has done for us. Today, we begin our discussion of the Third Article as we focus on the work of the Holy Spirit. We will discuss the Trinity, understand we cannot come to faith without Him, learn more information about the Holy Spirit, and realize the Holy Spirit is always working. Late in our lesson, we will learn why many end up in hell even though the Holy Spirit is always working.

LESSON

As we move into the Third Article of the Creed, we say, “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” By professing those words, we declare we believe in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Although we may say we believe in the Holy Spirit and, therefore, that we believe in the Trinity, we need to take a few moments to re-visit the topic of the Trinity before we discuss the work of the Holy Spirit.

Turn to page 72 in your Handouts.

Revisiting the Trinity

Circle the number of each true statement about the Trinity. Be prepared to explain your response.

1. The term “trinity” is never used in the Bible.
2. Typically, we define the Trinity as three persons, one being.
3. If you do enough research, you can arrive at a complete understanding of the Trinity.
4. The three persons of the Trinity each have particular work which we associate with them.
5. The work of God the Father is only the work of creation and preservation.
6. When the world was created, only God the Father was present and active.
7. The Holy Spirit is primarily responsible for the work of creating and maintaining faith.
8. The Holy Spirit is less significant than God the Father or Jesus Christ.
9. In the Trinity, the Father is supreme, followed by the Son, and followed then by the Holy Spirit.
10. To be a Christian, it is necessary to believe in the Trinity.
11. Within the Trinity, the Holy Spirit’s responsibility is to carry out the work given to Him by God the Father.
12. Although we associate particular work with each person of the Trinity, the function of each person extends beyond that particular work.
13. Within the Trinity, all aspects of life, faith, and eternity are contained.
14. Although there are many different symbols used to describe the Trinity, none of them perfectly portray the work of each person of the Trinity.
15. The Trinity is a mystery no one on earth will ever fully understand.

As we revisit the Trinity, we realize once again that we cannot and will not understand all aspects of the Trinity. Even though that may be true, we still have every reason to believe in the Trinity and the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Bible provides us with that information.

Having revisited the Trinity, we need to begin our discussion of the Holy Spirit and how His work affects our lives.

Before we can fully realize the importance of the Holy Spirit and His work, we need to first understand our condition in relation to our faith.

In the explanation of the Third Article, we say, "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him."

Look at the next page in your Handouts.

I Can't Do It

Although we believe we can do many things, the Third Article makes it clear that we cannot believe by our own efforts. On the line in front of each true statement, write the word "yes."

- _____ 1. As much as I want to believe differently, it is impossible for me to come to faith without the work of the Holy Spirit.
- _____ 2. Although I can't come to faith on my own, I can come to faith as long as the Holy Spirit assists me.
- _____ 3. If I think and study long enough, I can discover a way to come to faith by my own efforts.
- _____ 4. As I stand before my God, I am a beggar who has nothing to offer, yet who is very grateful for everything God provides.
- _____ 5. It may be true that some people are unable to believe on their own, but it is possible for me because I have learned about Jesus in Sunday School.
- _____ 6. In the arena of faith, I know I am helpless and can do nothing on my own to earn faith.
- _____ 7. Because I was born in sin and continue to sin, I lack the power to believe by my own efforts.
- _____ 8. If it were possible for me to believe in Jesus by my own efforts, I would see little need for God's work in my life.
- _____ 9. If I took the time to learn all the information about Jesus, I could then say that I came to faith by my own efforts.
- _____ 10. No matter what I do or know, faith will always remain something the Holy Spirit works in me by His grace.
- _____ 11. Once the Holy Spirit offers me a little assistance, I can continue to believe on my own.

- _____ 12. If the Holy Spirit created faith in my heart and then left, I could maintain that faith by my own efforts.
- _____ 13. All aspects of faith are the work of the Holy Spirit and never my doing.
- _____ 14. Since the Holy Spirit works faith and maintains faith, I have every reason to give Him my praise and honor every day.

The explanation to the Third Article makes it clear that faith is the work of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it also reminds us of our helplessness, of our incredible need for God. Without the Holy Spirit at work, faith would not exist and if faith did not exist, life would be lived only to spend eternity in hell.

Who brought their explanation of who the Holy Spirit is as their extra credit?

(Discuss as time permits and incorporate into the remainder of the class discussion.)

We need the Holy Spirit and His work in our lives. Turn to page 74 in your Handouts so we can learn more information about the Holy Spirit.

This I Believe

Draw a star in front of each true statement as it relates to the Holy Spirit and His work in your life.

1. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, fully God in every way.
2. The Holy Spirit has not existed forever, but arrived some time after the creation of the world.
3. The Holy Spirit's work is less important than Jesus' work of forgiveness.
4. The Holy Spirit possess all the attributes that belong to God the Father.
5. The Holy Spirit selectively chooses where and when to work faith.
6. For lack of a better explanation, the Holy Spirit has some type of formula that is used to determine who receives faith and who does not.
7. The Holy Spirit has unlimited power and can work faith in the heart of every person whether they want Him to work faith or not.
8. The Holy Spirit is sometimes called the "Counselor" in the Bible because of the comfort He provides as He maintains faith.
9. The Holy Spirit worked faith in my heart and not in the heart of someone else because I was worthy to receive His gift of faith.

10. The Holy Spirit only loves those who are believers.
11. The Holy Spirit lives in my heart in a way that is beyond explanation.
12. The Holy Spirit wants all people to be saved, but also realizes some will reject what He offers.
13. The Holy Spirit waits for me to believe. If I can't do it on my own, He will help me.
14. I need the Holy Spirit every day; without Him, it is impossible to have the hope of eternal life in heaven.
15. The Holy Spirit gives me the power to grow in my faith, to continually learn and understand His work better.

Let's turn our focus now to the work of the Holy Spirit. We already said the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts, yet we need to expand on that statement to gain a broader understanding of His work.

Look at the next page in your Handouts.

Always Working

Each new day, the Holy Spirit is at work in your heart. On the line in front of each true statement, write the word, "me" as we learn more about the work of the Holy Spirit.

- _____ 1. Through my contact with the Word of God, the Holy Spirit enables me to grow in my faith.
- _____ 2. For most people, faith begins at Baptism where the Holy Spirit has promised to enter our hearts.
- _____ 3. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of those who don't claim Him as Lord with the hope they will allow Him into their hearts.
- _____ 4. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper as His means of enriching my faith.
- _____ 5. The Holy Spirit is only at work when I am at church for worship.
- _____ 6. Once I have faith, the work of the Holy Spirit is completed. The rest is up to me.
- _____ 7. All the spiritual blessings of God became available to me after the Holy Spirit worked faith in my heart.

- _____ 8. Some of the spiritual blessings I receive from the Holy Spirit include the assurance of forgiveness, the knowledge of peace with God, and the assurance of God's presence every day.
- _____ 9. The Holy Spirit makes me holy, that is, He sets me apart for a special purpose.
- _____ 10. The Holy Spirit is always available when I face temptations to help me resist and do what is right.
- _____ 11. Typically, I should not expect the Holy Spirit to work in ways beyond His Word and Sacraments.
- _____ 12. Once the Holy Spirit works faith in my faith, there is no way I can lose that faith unless I reject it.
- _____ 13. Through the Holy Spirit, I receive a new birth, a renewal of my life so I can live for Him.
- _____ 14. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit, I am now able to do good works as my response to His activity.

On this side of heaven, the work of the Holy Spirit never ends. Every day, the Holy Spirit is working in your life enabling you to grow closer to Him, to walk in His ways, and to follow where He leads.

If the Holy Spirit is constantly working in our hearts and lives enabling us to remain in the faith, why do some die without saving faith?

Turn to page 76 in your Handouts.

Reality Check

More people will end up in hell than in heaven. It's a reality that seems strange to those who know Christ. Circle the number of each true statement.

1. If someone ends up in hell, it is because God made a mistake somewhere along the way.
2. If someone ends up in hell, it is entirely because they rejected what the Holy Spirit offered them.
3. Whether I want to believe it or not, good people die and end up in hell.
4. Since God has all power, it must be God's fault that not all people are saved.
5. Because of our free will, each one of us are able to choose not to believe.

6. If God wanted to, He could force everyone to believe and thereby make it possible for everyone to be in heaven.
7. If I reject God at a later time in my life and choose to continue rejecting Him, I could end up in hell.
8. “Once saved, always saved” is a statement only a fool would make.
9. On more than one occasion, the Holy Spirit offers the gift of faith to all His people. Unfortunately there are many who refuse His gift.
10. If I am a good person and do good deeds, I am very likely to arrive in heaven.
11. Good works will enable me to earn my way to heaven.
12. Since God is a good God who is kind and loving, He will not allow anyone to actually end up in hell.
13. As long as I go to church on occasion and lead a good life, I know I will be in heaven.
14. If God really wants all people to be saved, He should make it impossible to deny the faith. Since He didn’t do that, it is ultimately His fault if someone ends up in hell.

The work of the Holy Spirit is a wonderful work, the most wonderful work in our lives. Through His work, we receive the gift of faith. Yet, those who reject His gift, those who resist the work of the Holy Spirit will never see heaven. It’s a reality that motivates us to keep the faith.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

Describe two things you know about the Trinity.

What does the Third Article tell us about ourselves in relation to faith?

What are two things you know about the Holy Spirit?

Why do people end up in hell even though the Holy Spirit is always working?

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK

Next week, we will continue our discussion of the Third Article as we focus on the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. As we discuss the church, we will learn about the visible and invisible church, how to be the church, and ways to identify a true church. Near the end of our lesson, you will have an opportunity to use the information discussed in different scenarios.

Extra credit: For next week, bring a written, one paragraph definition of the word “church.”

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK

Outline - Lesson 14

OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

MEMORY WORK TERMS & APPLICATION: PAGE 77

Terms & Application

❖ “Imprint On The Mind” ❖
(Memory Work)

Lord’s Prayer - 2nd & 3rd Petition

℞ “Understanding Before Imprinting” ℞
(Defining Terms)

Kingdom- _____

Grace - _____

Will of God - _____

Hinders - _____

Purpose - _____

Sinful Nature - _____

📁 “In Simple Terms” 📁
(In Your Own Words)

⌚ **“Using What You Know”** ⌚
(Applying It To Life)

How long will it take before God’s final kingdom comes: _____

What is one thing you can do to ensure you are doing God’s Will: _____

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Describe two things you know about the Trinity.

What does the Third Article tell us about ourselves in relation to faith?

What are two things you know about the Holy Spirit?

Why do people end up in hell even though the Holy Spirit is always working?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Last week, we concluded our discussion of the Holy Spirit and His work within us. Today, we continue our discussion of the Third Article as we focus on the holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints. As we discuss the church, we will learn about the visible and invisible church, how to be the church, and ways to identify a true church. Near the end of our lesson, you will have an opportunity to apply the information discussed to different scenarios.

LESSON

As part of the Third Article, we profess that we believe in the holy Christian Church.

Who brought their definitions of the word “church” for their extra credit work?

(Discuss and relate to the remainder of the lesson.)

The holy Christian Church is made up of all true believers in the world. Oftentimes, we refer to these people as members of the “invisible church,” since we cannot look into a person’s heart and know for sure they are true believers. Along

with the term “invisible church,” we also use the term “visible church” to describe all those who **claim** to believe in Christ.

Turn to page 78 in your Handouts.

To say we believe in the church, we need to be able to distinguish those who belong only to the visible church from those who belong to the invisible church. Keep in mind that those who belong to the invisible church also belong to the visible church in most instances.

(Note: Since we cannot draw a precise line between visible and invisible, there will be statements below that could be either. The main purpose of the information below is to provide some indications of those who belong to the invisible church so that the students also realize what evidence should be present in their personal lives.)

Visible or Invisible?

For each statement below, determine whether it describes someone who belongs to the visible church or the invisible church. If they belong only to the visible church, put a “V” on the line. If it appears they belong to the invisible church, put an “I” on the line.

- _____ 1. I live in Africa, believe in Christ as my Savior, and worship Him with my family since we do not have a church.
- _____ 2. I go to church when it fits my schedule and leave no different than I came.
- _____ 3. I am a member of the Catholic church, know Christ as my Lord, and believe my salvation is only possible by the grace of God.
- _____ 4. I go to church every Sunday, but can't really say that Christ is active in my life.
- _____ 5. I follow Christ and seek His Will for my life each day. Due to age, I am not able to be at church as often as I would prefer.
- _____ 6. I am baptized and confirmed, but have no interest in God or His activity in my life.
- _____ 7. I believe I can worship God wherever I am. So, I seldom attend worship or spend time with my God.
- _____ 8. I know the right words to say and the right things to do at worship. Beyond that, God has little place in my life.
- _____ 9. I look forward to worship and, as I worship, I am an active participant in the music and the liturgy.

- _____ 10. I attend a church that allows me to believe whatever I want to believe. It matters not whether it agrees with the Bible.
- _____ 11. Since I live in the Philippines, my opportunities to worship are limited, yet, if I have the opportunity, I can't wait to gather for worship.
- _____ 12. I have gone to church for many years, yet have never seen any real value in being at worship. It's merely a duty I perform.
- _____ 13. I worship because it's what my heart leads me to do.

When we realize those who are only members of the visible church will never see heaven, it reminds us that we need to do much more than claim to be Christians. Our lives need to give evidence that Christ lives in our hearts and affects our lives.

Turn to the next page in your Handouts.

Demonstrating Evidence

Since we are Christians, our lives should demonstrate we are part of the holy Christian Church. If the statement below provides evidence that you are part of the holy Christian Church, write, "yes" on the line in front of the statement.

- _____ 1. I show up for church because it's what my parents tell me I must do.
- _____ 2. I treat others with kindness and respect, even when they don't treat me in the same way.
- _____ 3. I look out for myself because I know no one else will look out for me.
- _____ 4. I do my best to forgive and forget, to not hold grudges.
- _____ 5. I surround myself with people who make me feel good and ignore those who think I should do something for them.
- _____ 6. I begin my day in prayer asking God to guide me so I can make a difference for Him before the day ends.
- _____ 7. I talk to God only when I am desperate. The rest of the time, I handle things on my own.
- _____ 8. I realize the need to confess my sins and look forward to hearing the pronouncement of forgiveness at worship.
- _____ 9. I do whatever is necessary to get good grades at school, even if it means cheating on a test.
- _____ 10. I do what my parents tell me to do without arguing or talking back.

- _____ 11. I treat people in whatever way I need to treat them so that I can get what I need from them.
- _____ 12. I make the most of each day fully aware that each day is a gift from God.
- _____ 13. I get out of bed wishing for a good day, yet not expecting it to happen.
- _____ 14. I smile on the outside, but find myself very sad and lonely on the inside.
- _____ 15. I look for opportunities to help others; I notice when others are sad and offer to help.

Because we are part of the holy Christian Church, our lives should be different than those who have no knowledge of Christ. The things you do in your day will vary, yet what you do should give evidence that you are a Christian, that you are part of the holy Christian Church.

As a member of the holy Christian Church, we need to take a few moments to consider what you can do within your church, what you can do at _____ to express your faith and continue growing in that faith.

Look at page 80 in your Handouts.

Being Who I Am

Circle the number of each true statement as it relates to your involvement in the church.

1. As part of the church, I can offer to acolyte and usher for the worship services.
2. As part of the church, I can sing in the choir if God has given me that gift.
3. As part of the church, it is okay for me to watch others do all the work since I am only a teenager.
4. I can offer to greet people at the door on Sunday morning with a smile and a warm "Good morning!"
5. I can come to church, go through the service, and leave no different than I came.
6. I choose to respect church property, to pick up trash when I see it, and to do what I can to care for the church building.
7. I attend youth activities because I know it's the right thing to do.

8. I choose to be involved in Sunday School or Bible Class because I want to grow in my faith.
9. As part of the church, I offer to assist the elderly who need help at worship.
10. I volunteer to teach or assist with Sunday School because I am eager to teach others about the Jesus I know in my heart.
11. As part of the church, I arrive looking like worship is the most boring activity of my week.
12. I ask adults what I can do to help at worship and other activities.
13. I make it obvious that I enjoy being at church and being involved in worship and other activities.
14. When I can help serve a meal or set up for a meal, I do it with a joyful heart.

It's easy to talk about the church. Yet, our God has called us to be the church, to be those who demonstrate their faith by the words they speak and the actions they perform. Claiming to be the church means nothing unless you choose to be the church while at the church building and within your community.

As we use the word "church," we need to be aware that the word can be used in several different ways. So far in our discussion, we have referred to "church" as a group of believers. Yet "church" can refer to a building. We call this building, "_____ Lutheran Church."

The word can also be used to describe a group of people who gather to worship in a particular place. This is _____ congregation, the group of people who gather at _____ for worship. This is probably the most common use of the word.

"Church" can be used to describe the visible church we discussed a few moments ago which is comprised of all those who claim to be Christians. It can also be used to describe what we call a "denomination." A denomination is a group of churches, a group of congregations that agree in their practice and teachings. Lutheran is a denomination. Baptist, Methodist, and Catholic are all denominations. Each of those denominations are made up of many congregations that agree in their basic teachings and practices.

Before we leave the topic of the holy Christian Church, we need to consider how we identify the church, how we know if a place of worship is a true church, a gathering of people who are engaging themselves in true worship.

The holy Christian Church isn't necessarily found everywhere you find a group of people gathered in worship. The holy Christian Church is only found where the Word of God is taught accurately and where Baptism and the Lord's Supper are being used as God directed. If these two are not occurring, the gathering of people in that place is not to be considered part of the holy Christian Church.

Turn to page 81 in your Handouts.

Identifying the Church

Read each statement below. If it describes a true church, a church that practices and teaches the Word of God and uses Baptism and the Lord's Supper properly, circle the number of that statement.

1. In this church, Baptism merely makes you a member of the congregation.
2. In this church, you are free to believe whatever you want to believe as long as you believe something.
3. In this church, the body and blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament in the way we teach in our Lutheran church.
4. In this church, some of the Bible is God's Word, but not necessarily all of it.
5. This church teaches certain things as truth and merely uses the Bible to verify what their church teaches.
6. This church preaches good works as the way to earn heaven.
7. This church only baptizes after members are old enough to decide they want to be baptized.
8. This church teaches that Christ forgives most sins, but not necessarily all sins.
9. In this church, rituals and traditions are more important than what the Bible teaches.
10. In this church, God does His part in salvation and the members do their part to meet God half way.
11. In this church, the Word of God is used as a guide for living.
12. In this church, gathering to worship is what God's people do.
13. In this church, the Lord's Supper offers you more forgiveness than you would receive from the pronouncement of forgiveness which follows the confession of sins.
14. In this church, the Word of God determines what is right, what is truth, and how one should live their lives.
15. In this church, God's Word is all God's Word. There is no part of the Bible that is not the Word of God.

In any town, you can find a church, often numerous churches. Yet, as you see those churches and even consider attending one of them, remember that, just because it says, “church” on the sign, it isn’t automatically a church that is part of the holy Christian Church we profess in our Creed.

Before we end our lesson today, we want to take the information we have discussed and see how well you can use it in different situations.

Turn to pages 82-84 in your Handouts.

Applying the Evidence

Read each example given below and answer the questions which follow.

Jena is 18 and has just graduated from high school. She was baptized and confirmed at her local Lutheran church, yet has attended church only on Christmas and Easter since she was confirmed. If asked, she would claim she is a Christian, but doesn’t have time for church. On occasion, in desperation, she prays, but seldom sees it as beneficial. As she leaves for college, she has no plans to be active in a church.

Based on this information, does the evidence indicate she a member of the “Invisible” Church? _____

Is she a member of the “Visible” Church? _____

Is she actively using her Christian faith? _____

What specific things give evidence that she is not using her faith? List four things below:

Jonathan is 4 years old. He goes to Sunday School every Sunday and loves to sing. When he arrives home from church, he tells everyone about his morning and all he learned. In the church service, Jonathan listens to the message most of the time and asks questions about things he hears. He can’t wait to learn more about Jesus.

Based on this information, is he a member of the “Invisible” Church? _____

Is he a member of the “Visible” Church? _____

Is he actively using his Christian faith? _____

What specific things give evidence that he is using his faith? List four things below:

Juanita was just confirmed last year. Even so, she still remains active in worship and in the youth group. Prayer is an important part of her life and she finds it very comforting to know Jesus is always there for her. Last month, her mother was killed in a car accident. Right now, Juanita is upset with God and can't understand why He allowed this to happen. She is still attending church, yet has a lot of unanswered questions and is very frustrated and hurt. She is trying to make sense of everything, but having a difficult time. Some of her friends told her that God is punishing her, but she doesn't believe that is true.

Based on this information, is she a member of the "Invisible" Church? _____

Is she a member of the "Visible" Church? _____

Is she actively using her Christian faith? _____

What specific things give evidence that she is using her faith? List four things below:

Marcia was raised in a Christian home. As she grew up, she went to church and Sunday School. Yet her father was abusive, hit her, and made fun of her nearly every day. Marcia learned about Jesus in Sunday School, but now, as an adult, she can't believe God would have allowed all those things to happen. In her frustration, she has stopped going to church, stopped praying, and has no interest in anything faith-related. At age 32, it doesn't matter to her whether God exists or not.

Based on this information, does she appear to be a member of the "Invisible" Church? _____

Is she a member of the “Visible” Church? _____

Is she actively using her Christian faith? _____

What specific things give evidence that she is not using her faith? List four things below:

What are three things you could do that might help her renew her faith and trust in her God?

John is 14 and plans to be confirmed in about 3 months. He has been at Catechism Class and has learned about his faith and his God, yet once Confirmation is over, he has little intention of coming to church or learning more about his God. In his mind, he has done his part; he is ready to graduate from the church. Going to the Lord’s Supper may happen once in a while in the future as he thinks about it, but whether he goes or not, really doesn’t matter to him. He just wants to be done with church.

Based on this information, does he appear to be a member of the “Invisible” Church? _____

Is he a member of the “Visible” Church? _____

Is he actively using his Christian faith? _____

What specific things give evidence that he isn’t using or planning to use his faith? List four of those things below:

The last example looked much like what I see too often with our Confirmands. For whatever reason, many think going through the motions is good enough, that once they are confirmed, they are done with church. If you choose to make that your future path for your faith-life, don't be surprised by what you get. God has so much to offer you. He has big plans for you, yet those plans will go to waste if you choose to ignore what He offers you as part of His Church.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

What is the difference between the visible and invisible church?

What are three things you can do to give evidence that you are part of the invisible church?

What are two things you can do in your church to demonstrate you are part of the holy Christian Church?

What are two specific ways you can tell if a church is part of the holy Christian Church?

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK

Next week, we will continue our discussion of the Creed as we focus on the most important topic of the Christian faith - forgiveness. We will discuss the significance of forgiveness, what forgiveness is, how to forgive ourselves, and how to forgive others.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK

Outline - Lesson 15

OPENING PRAYER

MEMORY WORK

MEMORY WORK TERMS & APPLICATION: PAGE 85

Terms & Application

❖ “Imprint On The Mind” ❖
(Memory Work)

Lord’s Prayer - 4th & 5th Petition

℞ “Understanding Before Imprinting” ℞
(Defining Terms)

Daily Bread - _____

Support - _____

Devout - _____

Salvation - _____

Self-control - _____

Deny - _____

📁 “In Simple Terms” 📁
(In Your Own Words)

⌚ “Using What You Know” ⌚
(Applying It To Life)

What are two things God has given you today beyond the basics of life: _____

As God offers to forgive you, what does He expect you to do toward others: _____

QUIZ TIME

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What is the difference between the visible and invisible church?

What are three things you can do to give evidence you are part of the invisible church?

What are two things you can do in your church to demonstrate you are part of the holy Christian Church?

What are two specific ways you can tell if a church is part of the holy Christian Church?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Last week, we spent our time discussing the church and the communion of saints. Today, we continue our discussion of the Creed by focusing on the most important topic of our Christian faith - forgiveness. We will discuss why forgiveness is so important, what forgiveness is, and how to forgive ourselves and those around us.

LESSON

As I just mentioned, the topic of forgiveness is the most important topic of the Christian faith. Nothing else will ever be more important than this topic and nothing else in your faith-life will matter until you understand forgiveness and what effect it has on your life.

To begin our topic of forgiveness, we need to consider why forgiveness is so important in our lives.

Turn to page 86 in your Handouts.

Forgiveness Matters!

Circle the number of each true statement as it relates to forgiveness.

1. Without forgiveness, heaven would never exist for me.
2. Without forgiveness, it would be impossible for me to please my God.
3. If God chose not to forgive, the guilt of my mistakes would overwhelm me.
4. Without forgiveness, I would still know God loves me and cares for me.
5. If there were no forgiveness, I would still have good reason to pray.
6. Without forgiveness, I would view God as an angry God who is waiting to punish me for every mistake I make.
7. Without forgiveness, I could still earn blessings from God by my good works.
8. Without forgiveness, everything Christ did during His life, death, and resurrection would be pointless and meaningless.
9. Without forgiveness, it would be nearly impossible to view life optimistically.
10. Without forgiveness, God would not listen or answer my prayers.
11. Without forgiveness, I would have no reason to worship my God.
12. Without forgiveness, all the information in the Bible would be useless.
13. Without forgiveness, I would have no reason to believe God will bless me in this day.
14. Without forgiveness, my life would be hopeless and pointless.
15. Without forgiveness, my faith would be nothing more than empty words.
16. If forgiveness did not exist, everything else I know about faith would be useless.

Without forgiveness, everything in the Christian's life crumbles into a pile of rubble. Where there is no knowledge of forgiveness, God is not present; He is not watching over us, not providing us with hope, and not preparing a place for us in heaven.

Realizing the importance of forgiveness, we need to ask what might appear to be an obvious question, "What is forgiveness? What does it mean to be forgiven?"

(Encourage students to answer. Include their responses in the information that follows.)

If we were to define forgiveness, our definition would need to include several key points:

Forgiveness is:

- An act of God - It is all God's work; forgiveness is all about God
- An accomplished fact - It happened at the cross and applies forever
- An act of God's grace - We don't deserve to be forgiven; God acts out of love
- The finest demonstration of God's love
- A release - God releases us from our prison of sin and we release others from the prison we have held them in
- A covering over - God covers over our sins, our mistakes, with the blood of Christ. It's like writing all your mistakes on a sheet of paper and spray painting it black.
- Letting go - Letting go of the painful past because we want to enjoy the present
- Destroying the evidence - (Ask each student to take a piece of paper and write down one sin they have committed, one sin they want God to forgive. Take the students outside. Have each of them put their papers in a metal trash can. Then, light a match and have them say, "I am destroying the evidence. God declares me forgiven as I let go of the evidence.")

Turn to the next page in your Handouts as we look more carefully at what it means to forgive and be forgiven.

This Is Forgiveness

On the line in front of each statement, write "yes" or "no" as your response to the statement regarding forgiveness.

- _____ 1. When God forgives me, I need to believe God has immediately forgotten my mistake and now treats me as if it never happened.
- _____ 2. God's forgiveness eliminates the guilt and the consequences of my mistakes.
- _____ 3. When God forgives, He looks at the size of the mistake and then determines how much forgiveness and punishment He will provide.
- _____ 4. Since God forgives me, I am able to stand in His presence and receive more blessings from God than I can imagine.
- _____ 5. When God forgives, He waits for us to promise we will never do the same thing wrong again.
- _____ 6. Forgiveness tells me that my relationship with God has been restored, that all God's blessings and promises still belong to me.
- _____ 7. When I know I am forgiven by God, my response is to forgive anyone who has hurt or offended me regardless of what they may have done.

- _____ 8. When I forgive someone, I agree to do all I can to treat them as if it never happened.
- _____ 9. If someone does the same thing hurtful to me, I have a right to not forgive the second time it occurs.
- _____ 10. As God releases me from my mistakes, He expects and waits for me to release others as evidence of His forgiveness toward me.
- _____ 11. When I ask God to forgive me, He destroys the evidence of my mistakes. As He looks at my past, He sees me as His forgiven child.
- _____ 12. The best way to know I am forgiven is to do as many good works as I can to earn God's forgiveness.
- _____ 13. Since God forgives me, I know God does not use illness or accidents as punishment for my mistakes.
- _____ 14. If God only forgave those things I would never do wrong again, God would have no reason to forgive me.

Being forgiven by God means we are free to live for Him, to give our lives to making a difference for Him. As we live in His forgiveness, we also realize the need to forgive others. If we believe we are forgiven by God, we must be prepared to forgive those who hurt us.

Of all the people needing our forgiveness, one always stands out as the most difficult to forgive. That person is ourself. Since God forgives everything in our past when we come with repentant hearts, He expects us to forgive ourselves.

Why is it so difficult to forgive ourselves?

Turn to page 88 in your Handouts.

The Forgiveness Challenge

Circle the number of each true statement as it relates to why you have a difficult time truly forgiving yourself for your mistakes.

1. I find it difficult to forgive myself because I feel I don't deserve to be forgiven.
2. It's difficult to forgive myself because I don't really understand what it means to be a child of God.
3. I have a difficult time forgiving myself because I fail to remember that forgiveness is all God's work.
4. I fail to forgive myself many times because I can't get past the guilt I feel.

5. I fail to forgive myself because I don't believe God can forgive me for my mistakes.
6. It's difficult for me to forgive myself because I make the same mistakes more than once.
7. I have a difficult time forgiving myself because I believe I am unworthy of forgiveness.
8. I have a difficult time forgiving myself because I don't always believe His words of forgiveness actually apply to me and my life.
9. I have a difficult time forgiving myself because I feel I need to do something significant to earn His forgiveness.
10. It's difficult for me to forgive myself because I fail to accept that God's pronouncement of forgiveness on Sunday morning applies to me.
11. I have a difficult time forgiving myself because I sometimes feel that what I have done is unforgivable.
12. I struggle to forgive myself because I'm afraid to fail, because accepting forgiveness forces me to admit I have failed.
13. I have a difficult time forgiving myself because I don't want to believe I am a sinner in need of the forgiveness only God can offer.

As difficult as it may be to forgive ourselves, we must learn how to do it. Life will never be what God intended until we forgive ourselves.

Look at page 89 in your Handouts.

Accepting Forgiveness

Circle the number of each true statement, of each statement that provides a way for you to forgive yourself.

1. To forgive myself, I need to remember what Jesus did for me on the cross.
2. To forgive myself, I need to do some extra things to keep God happy.
3. To forgive myself, I need to remind myself that God loves me, cares for me, and wants me to enjoy life.
4. To forgive myself, I need to recall that God has a special purpose for my life, a purpose I can only fulfill by forgiving myself and getting on with life.
5. To forgive myself, I need to tell myself as often as necessary that I am a baptized child of God, bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus.

6. To forgive myself, I need to believe that the Holy Spirit is living in my heart enabling me to live my life for Christ.
7. To forgive myself, I need to leave all the guilt with my Lord. He does not ask me or expect me to carry it any longer.
8. To accept Christ's forgiveness, I need to accept His forgiveness as a gift I have not earned, a gift I do not deserve, yet a gift offered freely by my loving Father.
9. To accept Christ's forgiveness as my own, I need to find a way to pay for my past.
10. To accept Christ's forgiveness, I need to believe I am forgiven and act like I am forgiven.
11. To forgive myself, I need to give myself permission to enjoy life, to live life to the fullest knowing that is what my God wants from me.
12. To accept Christ's forgiveness as my own, I need to offer Him my praise each day for His gift of forgiveness and then make the most of each day.
13. To forgive myself, I need to ask myself each morning, "What can I do to make a difference for my God today?" and then do it.
14. To forgive myself, I need to regularly confess my sins and hear His pronouncement of forgiveness.

Anyone will tell you that it's not easy to forgive yourself, yet that doesn't mean we choose not to make the effort. When we remember what Christ did on the cross and why He went to the cross, we must forgive ourselves. To do anything less is to believe Christ went to the cross for nothing.

Before we leave the topic of forgiveness, we need to consider ways we can forgive others. If we learn to forgive ourselves, yet fail to forgive those around us, we will find ourselves missing out on the benefits of forgiveness.

Look at the next page in your Handouts as we consider how we can forgive others.

As I Forgive You

Respond to each statement below by writing "yes" or "no" on the line in front of the statement.

- _____ 1. Before I can forgive someone else, they need to apologize.
- _____ 2. To forgive others, I need to choose to no longer hold what they did against them.
- _____ 3. To forgive others, I must refuse to hold a grudge.

- _____ 4. Any grudges I may be holding right now, I need to let go of if I intend to forgive someone else.
- _____ 5. To forgive others, I must refuse to seek revenge.
- _____ 6. To forgive others, I need to remember that Christ has forgiven me solely by His grace, not because of anything I have done.
- _____ 7. To forgive others, I need to remind myself that Christ on the cross paid for the sins of the whole world. I have no right to refuse to forgive.
- _____ 8. To forgive others, I need to, as much as possible, treat them as if it did not happen.
- _____ 9. To forgive others, I need to make peace with the situation in my mind with God's help.
- _____ 10. To forgive others, I need to ask God regularly to help me let it go so it doesn't continue to eat at me.
- _____ 11. To forgive others, I need to deliberately avoid them at all costs.
- _____ 12. To forgive others, I need them to also forgive me.
- _____ 13. To forgive others, I need to focus my energy on what I can do for my God instead of on the negative thoughts that might go through my mind.
- _____ 14. To forgive others, I need to ask myself, "What can I do to make a difference for Christ today," instead of dwelling on the past.

Forgiving is not a simple task whether we are forgiving ourselves or forgiving someone else. As Christ went to the cross in our place, His suffering and death for our mistakes was anything but a simple task. Yet He endured it for our benefit. Now, He waits to see our response as we forgive ourselves and those around us.

REVIEW OF THE DAY

What would be different in your life if forgiveness did not exist?

Give me your definition of forgiveness based on our discussion today.

What are two things you can do to forgive yourself?

What are three things you can do to forgive others?

PREVIEW OF NEXT WEEK

Next week, we will conclude our study of the Creed as we discuss the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. As we consider those topics, we will talk about the existence of heaven and hell and what we do while we wait to arrive in heaven as believers.

Extra credit: For next week, bring an obituary from the newspaper to be used in our discussion of the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.

TEST NEXT WEEK

Next week, after we discuss our remaining material on the Creed, we will have our second test. It will cover all the information related to our discussion of the Creed. I encourage you to take your Handouts home this week and review pages 37-90 as you prepare for the test. Pages 91-96, which we will discuss next week, will also be included on the test.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL MEMORY WORK

