# THE LOYE OF CHRIST

Lessons from the Upper Room



LEADER GUIDE WEEKS 2-5



# WEEK 2

# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

# READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

# **DISCUSS**

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.



# **BIG IDEA**

TWO

#### The Pilgrim's Progress is an allegory written by John Bunyan, an English preacher and writer. It tells the story of the protagonist, Christian, as he journeys from his hometown, the "City of Destruction," to the "Celestial City." After reading "the book in his hand", which is the Bible, Christian finds himself carrying a massive weight that troubles him constantly. So he leaves everything, including his home, wife, children, in order to find salvation for himself. During his journey, Christian is side-tracked, and seeks relief from his heavy burden through Law. but he finds this the crushing burdensome, as well. By the guidance Goodwill, who is Christ, Christian returns to "the straight and narrow" King's Highway. As he place of deliverance," arrives a t "the discovers that he can only find true rest and relief when he lays it all down at the cross. Only now is Christian is able to proceed to the Celestial City. On his journey, he encounters others on the same path. As they travel, they experience trials, humbleness, and serving one another.



Though they face many difficult times and dangerous situations, they no longer have to be afraid, because they know the One they follow and where their final destination lies.

In this week's study, we will see that we, too, are on a path much like Christian's. Following Christ can be a challenge, but the work to follow Him is far lighter than the burden we carry when we try to do life on our own. Jesus turns our meaningless, tiresome labor into spiritual productivity, purpose, and fulfillment!

#### Passages we'll review:

Matthew 11:28-30; Ecclesiastes 3:9-14

# **OPENING**

What stood out to you from the message this week? What led you to really think? Did anything challenge you?

If you had one week to go anywhere in order to relax, refresh, and recharge, where would you go? Why?

 0	

-	



# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

What jumped out at you from the video in this session? What are some of the key points that affected you more than others?

# READ

Read Matthew 11:28-30

At one time or another, everyone has experienced a time of weariness and burnout. What are the characteristics or tendencies of a weary soul?

(Open for discussion)

N	<b>OTES</b>	

·



What does this passage reveal to us about a "works-based" righteousness? Why do so many followers of Christ feel so exhausted and burned out?

(Works-based righteousness leads us try to live our lives based on our own merits. As a result, the load we carry doesn't lighten up; it is a perpetual load from which we find no relief! When we live by the law, or works-based righteousness, we will be worn down with no relief in sight. Like the religious leaders of Jesus' time, many Christians base their beliefs on rules and traditions. The expectations they work to live up to can be overbearing, works-driven, and self-serving.)

What are some of the ways society says we can find rest? What are some of the healthy and unhealthy forms of rest that we gravitate toward?

(Open for discussion)

AI			C
		Ш	
T 4			




In Jesus' day, farmers used oxen or other large

animals to plow fields. They would use a yoke to join two animals together, allowing them to share the load. The animals would together in unison, carrying the load in a balanced way.

In this passage, Jesus instructed us to take up His yoke and learn from Him. How did Jesus describe Himself? Does this match your opinion of who Christ is? How does it help us in knowing how to live?

(Jesus described Himself as "gentle and humble in heart." As we take up Jesus' yoke, we can learn from Him, both as the Teacher and through the lessons He taught by the life He lived. Jesus served those under Him, showing us that true fulfillment comes, not from being served, but from serving others for the sake of Christ, bringing glory to God. Open for discussion.)

-	



## **NOTES**

In Bible times, the phrase "take a yoke" meant to become a disciple. What does Jesus offer to those who choose to follow Him and take up His yoke, working and serving for Him? How is the rest that Jesus offers unique in comparison to the world's definition?

(To those who choose to follow Him, Jesus offers rest. The rest He gives isn't just physical rest, as in sleep. His rest comes from a restored relationship with God that provides rest for the soul. It is an echo of what Adam and Eve experienced in the Garden of Eden and is a result of the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to His people. When we choose to take up Christ's yoke, we find true, spiritual rest as we surrender to Him and follow His lead.)

1	 
1	
,	
	 _



Is it easy to t	take up Jo	esus' yoke a	and fo	llow Hi	m?
What would	our lives	look like	if we	chose	to
take up His y	oke each	day?			

# (It isn't "easy" to follow Jesus. Just like Christian in <u>The Pilgrim's Progress</u>, we must be willing to give up everything for His sake. But if we refuse His yoke, we will find ourselves carrying burdens that we were not meant to carry, much heavier than we can bear. When we take up His yoke, we find freedom in Christ because we do not have to carry the burden of sin and guilt. We are not relieved of our responsibilities, but He will guide us down the path that is right for us. In Him, we will find a life that is fulfilling and rewarding!)

# **DIGGING DEEPER**

Read Ecclesiastes 3:9-14

How does this passage contrast with what we see in today's culture?

(Open for discussion)

NOTES			



# How can we find true satisfaction in life? Where does it come from?

(We will not be able to understand all of God's purposes through our own efforts. We can only find our true satisfaction and fulfillment in Him. God sets the times. He created everything. He created us for eternity. So, we must remember that we are to live for Him. He will fill us with joy when we serve Him and do His work.)

We must remember to view all that we do through God's lens, with a positive and joyful spirit. Then, even the mundane things will find meaning in Him. When we serve Him and do His work, we are affecting eternity!

True happiness can only be found when we live our lives in God's will - humbly serving others, walking in His ways, and obeying His commands. Otherwise, our pursuit of happiness is futile. Christ dignified service and sacrifice, and we will find joy when we follow the examples He set for us!

N			C
	U	L	




# **PRAY**

Consider the following as you pray together:

- Jesus instructs us to <u>come</u>, <u>take up</u> His yoke, and <u>learn</u> from Him. Which of these do you need to work on?
- We all have a burden to carry. The question is, will it be the work that is appropriate and fitting for who He has created us to be, or will it be that which is too much for us to bear? What burdens are you carrying now that you need to give to Jesus?
- When we look at our time here on earth, the only things that will last are the things we do for Him. What can you do this week to find joy in your daily labor?
- We may not always understand all that God is doing, but we cannot lose heart! Who can you encourage this week through your service, humility, and tranquility?

NI		1		C
N	U		L	7




# WEEK 3

# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

# READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

# **DISCUSS**

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.



# **BIG IDEA**

### There are many proverbs that have been passed down over time. These sayings express a truth based on common sense or experiences. One such proverb is: "A good beginning makes a good ending." It is often attributed to western novelist Louis L'Amour. When asked about his writing, he noted that, for a good storyline to work, it needed a good ending. This proverb, however, goes back much farther, to around 1300. The original phrasing was: "This was it seems to me a good beginning. Thereafter was the better hope to come to a good ending." It suggests that being well- prepared and starting strong often leads to success. While this is often true, it is not guaranteed. Mary Poppins also used a proverb, "Well begun is half done," when referring to tidying up the nursery. This proverb originated with Aristotle, meaning, if you begin something properly, you are more than halfway to a successful completion. In essence, if you start off well, it is easier to finish well. Once again, we know that this is not always the case.




Perhaps a better proverb would be, "A good
beginning doesn't guarantee a good ending."
While we may have the best intentions at the
start, there are many things that can derail our
plans in life. Even being raised in a good,
Christian home is no guarantee for how a person
will turn out. Many times, the things of this
world can distract us and lead us away from the
things of God. In this week's study, we will look
at three stories in which the good ending wasn't
guaranteed, as well as how we can guard against
a not-so-good ending.

#### Passages we'll review:

Judges 16:1-5, 17-21; 2 Chronicles 24:22-24; Genesis 37:1-4, 18-21, 26-28; Philippians 2:1-8

# **OPENING**

What stood out to you from the message this week? What led you to really think? Did anything challenge you?

When you think of a humble person, what comes to mind? Why is this a challenging characteristic to find in others in today's world?




# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

What jumped out at you from the video in this session? What are some of the key points that affected you more than others?

# READ

Read Judges 16:1-5

In this passage, we see two cases of selfishness and self-interest. Samson started well as one of the judges God called to guide His people, but in the end, he yielded to his passions and desires and became enslaved to them. Delilah had an ulterior motive for pursuing Samson.

T	0	4		
			10	
	\ <i>\</i>			)

_			
_			
_			



# Why did Delilah pursue Samson? What was her end goal?

(The Philistine leaders wanted to overpower and capture Samson. They offered Delilah a huge sum of money if she would find out the source of his strength and betray him. While she pursued Samson, her real reason wasn't love, but money.)

Three times, Delilah sought to find the source of Samson's strength, and three times, he fooled her. But Delilah played to Samson's passion and wore him down.

#### Read Judges 16:17-21

		1	J D	C
T	U	1	שו	




# Why do you think Samson chose to reveal the secret of his strength to Delilah? Was it a simple mistake, or was it an indication of a deeper character flaw?

(Samson's passion interfered with his rational thought. He failed to see the trouble that was right in front of him, blinded by his own selfish desires. In doing so, he revealed one of his great character flaws. Samson chose his desire for Delilah over his loyalty to God. He yielded to his flesh and suffered defeat.)

Samson's strength didn't actually come from his hair, but rather his hair was a symbol of the strength he had because of his relationship with God. Now, Samson's strength was gone because of one poor decision. Samson lost God's presence and power when he surrendered to his passion in the face of temptation and betrayal.



#### How can we resist temptations in our own lives?

(Open for discussion. When temptation is in front of you, rely on God and His strength to help you stand firm. You do not have to give in to temptation. See 1 Corinthians 10:13.)

#### Read 2 Chronicles 24:22-24

Joash had been taught the truth of God's Word and how to lead His people well, but he had chosen not to take it to heart. He chose to obey out of obligation only, with no desire in his heart to obey. He even killed the prophet God sent to warn him of his sinful behavior.

-	



## **NOTES**

Jacob's family knew the true and living God, yet they chose to sin against Him. Their problems were exacerbated by their family dynamics.



# Why were Joseph's brothers so jealous of him? What are the consequences of jealousy and resentment? How have you seen jealousy, favoritism, and anger destroy family and friendships?

(Joseph's brothers were jealous of him because he was their father's favorite, and he was intended to be his heir. As a result, they hated him. Jealousy and resentment indicate a sinful heart, and when they take root, they breed terrible actions and broken relationships. Open for discussion.)

#### Read Genesis 37:26-28

Judah gave an alternative to killing Joseph that supposedly benefitted both parties. They ended up selling their brother into slavery for 20 shekels of silver, allowing him to live. But Judah's suggestion was still selfish and deceitful. Why do we fall for the lies of sin? How do we try to justify our sin?

N		T		C
T	V		שו	



# (Through our sinful, human perspective, sin seems appealing for a time. It focuses on us - our desires and feelings. When we take our eyes off of God and focus on ourselves, we give in to the desires of our sinful nature, even though they are only temporary pleasures. We try to justify our sin by making excuses and comparing ourselves to other people, rather than comparing ourselves to God. Open for discussion.)

# **DIGGING DEEPER**

Read Philippians 2:1-8

How does this passage challenge society's view of success and individualism?

(Open for discussion)



# Paul shows us the characteristics of those whose identity is found in Christ. What are these traits? Why is it so important that these traits are exhibited in our lives?

(When we are in Christ, we have these traits: of one mind, sacrificial love, no conceit or rivalry, care for others over our own self-interests. These traits reflect our true transformation in Christ, a life that has been changed. Open for discussion.)

We are reminded of the attitudes and actions Christ displayed for us. Why is it important to connect our attitudes and actions to those of Christ? How would it affect those around us?

(Christ was the supreme example of love, humility, and selflessness. When we are unified in Christ by love, there is no room for pride, selfishness, or envy. We should mirror the attitude of Christ so that we can share the gospel message with others.)

N	0	T	10	S



# **PRAY**

Consider the following as you pray together:

- How can we remain faithful to God when we are surrounded by the pressures and enticements of the world?
- What traits in Philippians 2:2-5 are seen in your life? Which ones do you need to work on?
- What may God be asking you to change, do differently, repent of, or pray about as a result of this week's study?

"The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they haven't yet come to the end of themselves. We're still trying to give orders and interfering with God's work within us." (A.W. Tozer)



# WEEK 4

# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

### READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

# **DISCUSS**

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.



# **BIG IDEA**

According to study, half a recent Americans say they are lonely. It is even more prevalent among those under the age of 25, at a whopping 70%. In light of this data, the U.S. Surgeon General released a plan aiming to combat the "loneliness epidemic." While this may seem like a new problem, the language surrounding this "loneliness pandemic" actually goes back several decades, to the 1980s. The conditions over the past few years have led to even more remote work and online activity, including food and grocery delivery. While it has led to an increase in convenience, it has had a negative effect on mental and emotional health.

Despite what we may like to admit, we were created for relationships. In the beginning, God created Adam in His image. He then created Eve to be his partner, because it was not good for man to be alone. God desired a personal relationship with mankind, which He first demonstrated by meeting with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

-	



# **NOTES**

When man sinned and was separated from God,	
He sent His Only Son to restore that	
relationship. During His time on Earth, Jesus	
poured into 12 men. As He taught them and	
built a personal relationship with them, He	
called them into a love relationship with	
Himself, not as a master/servant, but as friends	
of God. Through His ultimate sacrifice,	
mankind was once again able to have a loving	
relationship with God. The disciples were then	
called to share that same love with others. In	
this week's study, we will be challenged to live	
in a manner that brings glory to God and	
demonstrates His love to those around us, just	
as the disciples did.	

#### Passages we'll review:

John 15:12-14; Mark 10:45; Ephesians 4:15-16; Proverbs 3:3-4



# **OPENING**

What stood out to you from the message this week? What led you to really think? Did anything challenge you?

Do you remember the first time you "fell in love"? What was that like? How did you know?

# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

What jumped out at you from the video in this session? What are some of the key points that impacted you more than others?

		C
U	L	)



# READ

Read John 15:12-14

What is the difference between a servant and a friend? Why do you think God wants us to view our connection with Him in terms of a relationship rather than as servant and master?

(Open for discussion)

The term "friend" that Jesus uses in this passage refers to the inner circle of people surrounding a king. They were always close to the king, and they knew all of his secrets, but they were still under his rule. This was the same with the 12 men that Jesus called. They were part of His inner circle, but they were still under His authority. They had no room to compete with one another; they were all there to serve the King of Kings!

	-		
		1	
_			



# How would you describe the love that Jesus gives? How does it compare to the "love" that is so prevalent in our world today?

(The love that Jesus gives is like that described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It is not a love based on feelings, rather it is an act of the will. There is nothing we could ever do that would make us worthy of His love, yet He still chose to love us sacrificially. It is the polar opposite of the "love" the world gives. Our world promotes love that has an ulterior motive. It is based on circumstances and can be dismissed if the situation changes. It must be earned by the one to whom it is given.)

What is required in order for us to be considered a "friend of Jesus"? Why did Jesus have to command His followers to love other believers? Why is it so difficult to love others as Christ loved us?

-	



# **NOTES**

(We are friends of Jesus if we follow His commands, and in this case, love one another. This command is simple to understand, but difficult to carry out. True, sacrificial love is not natural for us. It is easy to become so busy trying to love God as we should that we forget to love one another. Instead, we must love as Christ loved us - sacrificially. When we lose our focus and allow sin to cloud our view, we begin to focus on ourselves instead of God and others.)

What would compel you to lay down your life for someone else? How have you experienced Jesus' sacrificial love in your own life? How can knowing Jesus' forgiveness and grace in your own life help you extend that love to others?

(Open for discussion)

 _
 _
 _
 _
_
_
 _
 _
 _



#### Read Mark 10:45

How does Jesus' teaching of servanthood go against our human nature? How does it compare with the advertisements, ideas, and causes our society surrounds us with?

(Jesus was the supreme example of servanthood. He had all of the glory and splendor, but He chose to set it aside in order to save us. He left His place of authority and came to be a Servant of all. Our own human nature leads us toward power and fame, not humility. Today's society focuses on doing what is best for ourselves, moving up on the social ladder, and being served by others beneath us. Open for discussion.)

Share about a time a leader in your life served those "lower" than they were. How did this change your view of this leader?

(Open for discussion)



Our life here is not intended to be a life of comfort and privilege, but rather one of service to others, as Christ modeled for us. What does it mean that Jesus was a "ransom for many"? How are you challenged in your own life by Jesus' example of a Servant of all?

(Ransom is tied to the idea of slavery. When one paid a ransom, he bought the freedom of the slave for a price. Jesus paid our ransom even though He knew no sin. As recipients of His ransom, we should also follow His example of service. Open for discussion.)

#### Read Ephesians 4:15-16

Why is it that people tend to go to extremes, focusing on either love or truth at the expense of the other? What are some examples of both extremes?

N	O	T	E	S
_ ,				

·	<del></del>



# (It is easier to focus on each one individually. When we focus solely on truth, we are only looking at the logical piece, neglecting emotions. When we focus solely on love, we are looking at the emotions, but neglecting the logic. It is difficult to connect these and tend to both. We can only do this as we mature in Christ. Open for discussion)

Why is it so important for every member of the church to be taught the Bible and understand doctrine? What happens when a follower of Christ is not grounded in the truth of God's word?

(When we know God's word and understand it, we have a foundation that can withstand the difficulties and temptations we will face. We can encourage one another and care for each other. When we don't know and stand firm in His truth, we will be blown about by the teachings of this world. Open for discussion.)

		1	J D	C
T	U	1	שו	

_			
-			
-			
-			
_			
_			
-			
_			
_			
-			
-			
_			
_			
_			
-			
_			



# **DIGGING DEEPER**

Read Proverbs 3:3-4

What are we to do with love and faithfulness? Why is this important?

(Love and faithfulness are to be permanently and securely attached to our lives. They should become second nature to us. When we bind them around our necks, we connect them to our outward life for others to see. They cannot just be things we do for the sake of doing them; we must understand, believe, and live by them joyfully. These qualities are essential to God's character and nature, and when we display them, we are reflecting Him to others and growing to become like Him.)

These verses give us a command with a promise.

When we choose to exhibit His love and faithfulness, we will find favor with God and others! But we must remember that it isn't enough to just know it; we must live it out. It involves attitude and action!

T			4
	()	HUN	



### **NOTES**

What are practical ways to exhibit His covenant love and faithfulness? How can you "bind them around your neck and write them on the tablets of your heart"?

(Open for discussion)

"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." (Saint Augustine of Hippo)




DEMONSTRATING THE LOVE OF CHRIST!

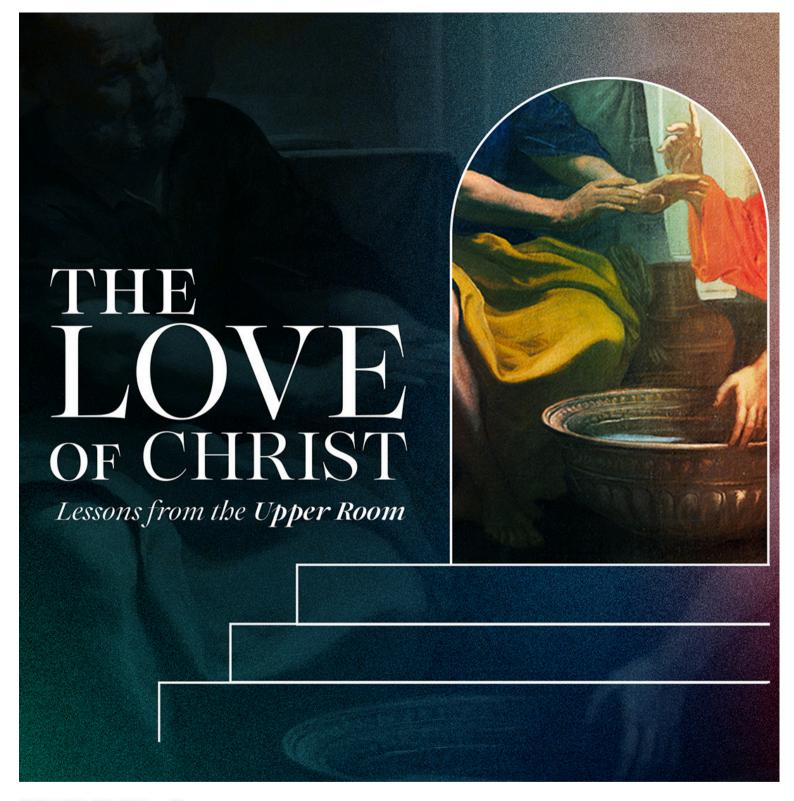
# **PRAY**

Consider the following as you pray together:

- Do you feel loved by Jesus? In what ways have you taken that love and given it to others in the same way? Look for opportunities this week that you can bless those in your life with genuine expressions of love.
- As we become more like Christ, our lives become less about ourselves and more about others. Think of those you interact with spouse, family, church, coworkers, neighbors. Would those who know you characterize you as a loving Christian? How can you be more effective in expressing sacrificial love for these people?
- Jesus set the example of being a Servant of all. Have you embraced the identity of a servant? What are some specific ways you can serve others this week?

## **NOTES**

-	



# WEEK 5

# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

# READ

Take some time in advance to read and consider the Bible study questions and come up with personal examples to encourage discussion.

# **DISCUSS**

We hope those who participate in the study walk away knowing, feeling, and doing differently as a result of amazing discussion.



# **BIG IDEA**

Reality speaks to the existence of God as we see in Romans 1:20, and we see that God has been speaking to us for thousands of years trying to instill in us these truths: your lives are being lived in rebellion against Him, you are an eternal soul, and you need to be made right with Him. Thankfully, the God who made you and who made the universe was willing and able to make things right with you through the sacrifice of His Son. He is also very willing and very able to make sure that your eternal soul is not abandoned. To those who trust in Him and His plan, He gives them eternal life (John 3:16).

### Passages we'll review:

Luke 23:43; John 21:4-15a; Revelation 21:1-4; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Isaiah 25:6-9

# **OPENING**

What stood out to you from the message this week? What led you to really think? Did anything challenge you?

Are you afraid of death? Why or why not?

T	0		C
	0	H,	5
T	V		



# WATCH

Make sure everyone can see the screen and the audio is at a comfortable level.

What jumped out at you from the video in this session? What are some of the key points that impacted you more than others?

# READ

Heaven, as we will see, is a place that is presented as perfect in the Bible. A lot of people who have seen movies or read books of "perfect" people or places may have a bit of a negative view of that word, as in those books or movies the "perfect" almost always shows itself to be imperfect. That perfection is either "plastic" and fake, or maybe even a front for something sinister.

Why do you think humans have this skewed view of perfection?

NT				C
	0	1	E	3



### **NOTES**

(Imperfect human attempts to manufacture perfection are often lackluster or fake because we are trying to manufacture something only God can do. Our sin has made us so that we are naturally discontent, selfish, and don't count God or others more important than ourselves, which leads to the breakdown of even our best efforts.)

### What do you think Heaven will be like?

(Open for discussion)

### Read Luke 23:43

Jesus addresses the thief that has repented as he is dying on the cross next to Him. He declared to the repentant thief on the cross, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in paradise." What comes into your mind when you think of the word "Paradise?"

(Open for discussion)




# The word Jesus used for "paradise" is paradeisos, which means "a park, that is, specifically an Eden, a place of future happiness, paradise". Paradeisos is the Greek word taken from the Hebrew word pardes which means "a park: - forest, orchard" (Strong's Concordance).

What is the purpose of a park? Why do you think Jesus is using that word here?

(Open for discussion)

Let's look at some misconceptions that the Devil loves to use as snares in our culture to dampen our excitement of Heaven and tell lies about God.

		C
U	L	)



earth. God will dwell among us, just as He did in

the Garden of Eden. We will dwell in His presence

and enjoy Him for all eternity. There will be no

more tears, sorrow, or death. Open for discussion.)

THE PROMISE OF HEAVEN!

Misconception #1 - Heaven will be boring and	NOTES
immaterial.	
Read John 21:4-15a	
Here Jesus is in His resurrected, glorified body. What does this passage teach us about the glorified bodies we are promised?	
(This shows us that Jesus' body after His resurrection is a physical one, the same kind of body promised to us in Romans 6:5. Here, Jesus welcomes His disciples, cooks for them, and eats with them. He is not an immaterial ghost.)	
Read Revelation 21:1-4	
What promises are here? Which is most exciting to you?	
(We have the promise of a new heaven and a new	



# In Revelation 22:1-3, we also see that the tree of life from Genesis will return and will bear fruit and heal the nations. God's presence will be there as well, and we will be serving God and ruling with Him over His creation! What does all of this imagery remind you of?

(This is a restoration of the Garden of Eden, and God will now be walking amongst His people again! We were given work in the Garden, and now that perfect, meaningful work is returning with a right relationship with God and His creation.)

What does the fact that we will be serving God, not just constantly standing around singing, imply?

(There will be things to do! We won't just be standing around all day, but will have good, meaningful tasks in serving God and exploring and utilizing His creation!)

		C
U	L	)

-	



Here, we see a return to Eden-like conditions. Think about all the excitement and joy the Earth can bring even while it is in a fallen state. What are some things that you truly enjoy now that you can give God glory for?

(Open for discussion)

God knows what our hearts and minds love, He designed us. He is the reason we enjoy good food, good company, sitting around a fire, swimming, meaningful work, feeling the sun on our skin, and good music. He is the author of all of our purest pleasures, and He wants to give His children good things as evidenced in James 1:17 and countless other scriptures.

### Read 1 Corinthians 2:9

How can this passage apply to our view of Heaven?

(Open for discussion)




	NOTES
Misconception #2 - Nothing is perfect.	
When you try to think up an image of perfection, what is it like?	
We have an imperfect view of perfection, because humans cannot be truly perfect this side of eternity. That is why our views of perfection are often flat, stale, or fake.)	
Going back to Revelation 21:3-4, imagine Earth with those aspects. What do you think that will	
be like?  (Open for discussion)	



Misconceptions #3 - "I won't be myself anymore in Heaven".

Studies have shown that some people, when thinking about their future, imagine themselves as strangers. Take a moment to imagine yourself in five years receiving an incredible blessing. Could you put yourself in that future person's shoes? Science has told us that many people often cannot, and that in their brain they generate another person to receive whatever positive blessings are coming their way. This often leads to poorer, in-the-moment choices of instant gratification. And we can believe and behave the same way here with eternity and godliness in mind.

When you think that God is going to give another person the blessings that He promised to you, what are you doing?

(You are believing that He is lying.)

		1	E	C
T	U	1	L	



In everything you do, work to keep your mind on the promises of Jesus, and TRUST that the good God who promises you these things is not lying to you. The new Heaven and the new Earth will one day be joined as one, and a truly perfect paradise will result. We will we see a return to Eden-like conditions, but with one massive improvement: the people, deeply in love and appreciative of what God has done for eternally sealed with them, noware goodness of God in their hearts and can fully enjoy Him and His creation apart from the curse of sin, resurrected, and made perfect in Him.

# DIGGING DEEPER

Read Isaiah 25:6-9

Isaiah prophesied against the nation of Israel as well as the Gentile nations surrounding them for their sins against God. Yet, even though God promised wrath and judgment against those who sinned against Him, He also offered hope to those who followed Him.

TAT	0		C
		Н,	
T .			

,	
,	
,	
'	
'	
,	
,	



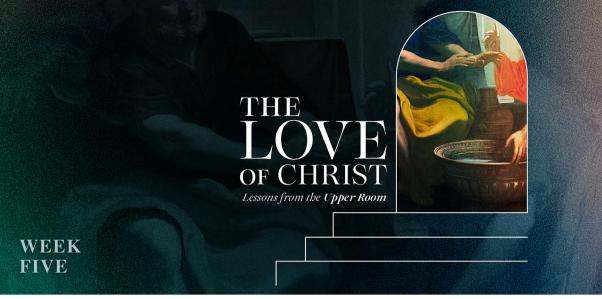
# How does this passage show us God's faithfulness even in difficult times?

(While Israel and other nations would be blind to the truth of Christ as Savior when He came to this earth, when He returns, they will see Him in all of His glory and power and recognize Him as Messiah and King! The feast mentioned here is the same feast Jesus mentions in the Gospels, referring to the promised future kingdom with Him. Even though we will face adversity and difficulties, we can rest in knowing that we have a future home where death will be conquered forever and our mourning will turn into gladness as we come together to worship Him for eternity.)

# How can the promise of salvation and rejoicing impact your perspective on present struggles and future hope?

(We can rejoice knowing that Christ has ultimately defeated sin and death. While we will face trials and persecution here on earth, we know that we will spend eternity with Him! In knowing about our future, we can trust Him in the difficult times, knowing that we have hope in Him.)

-	



# **PRAY**

Consider the following as you pray together:

- As we live our lives here on Earth, we must remember that, in Christ, we have a promise of eternal life with Him. Are you living your life now with an eternal perspective? How can you be more intentional in living your life in light of our eternal destiny with Him?
- As followers of Christ, we can rest in knowing that even in difficult times, we are promised a hope and a future with Him! What has happened this week that you can praise the Lord for? Spend time praising Him for His love, care, and provision, as well as His promise to never leave you.
- Knowing the future that we are promised in Heaven, what responsibilities do you have today? Look for opportunities to share this hope with those who are struggling and in need of His hope!

"If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world." (C.S. Lewis)

TAT	0		C
		Н,	
T .			



CrossPointe Church all rights reserved

