

Life Group Lesson

Joshua Celebration • Week of November 13

Introduction

Each year at Christ Church we lift up Joshua Celebration: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15b). We stop and ask God where and how the Lord wants us to commit in the coming year, as individuals and as families serving together. Because we are in a season of Thanksgiving, we count our blessings and not our problems. Joshua Celebration gives us the opportunity to say: “Lord, you are so good to me. Because you are faithful, I want to be faithful to you and your church.” Where is the Lord calling you to serve? How is the Lord asking you to give of yourself – your resource of time, energy, and finances to the work of His Kingdom. It is an honor to be a devoted follower at Christ Church. Lord, thank you!

As devoted followers, we commit to a six-fold covenant: Worshiping, Inviting, Serving, Tithing, Praying, and Learning (through Life Groups). You see, as Christ-followers, we are often caught in a duality of “I want to live a successful life and have nice things” and “Yet, I do want to be all-in when it comes to my faith, to keep my eyes on you, Lord, and one day hear you say, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant.’” How do we do this? Is the Lord opposed to our living fulfilled lives and enjoying nice things? Perhaps the better thing to ask is: ‘Lord Jesus, are you welcome in all areas of my life? Are you pleased with the desires of my heart, how I manage my time, and where I spend my money?’ When God has first place, the Lord Jesus Christ will be at home in every area of your heart. Jesus said,

“Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.... Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need” (Matthew 6:19-21, 33).

Background

We live in an opposite world. The culture tells us the way to get ahead is to look out for number one. Yet, Jesus said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it” (Matthew 16:24-25). The Lord’s commands can be summed up like this

– Love God and love others. When we love the Lord, we trust Him. We begin to realize, like a little child, that all we have is His. Tithing (faithfully giving the Lord the first ten percent) does not have to be an issue, because we soon begin to realize the Lord is my Shepherd and He will supply everything I need. Serving others in Jesus’ name becomes a joy and not a dread.

Many of you know this first-hand. Think about when you first began to serve and volunteer. Though some of you were unsure about volunteering initially, many of you have said that you soon realized how truly fulfilling and rewarding serving is. Serving, tithing, worshiping, inviting, praying, learning together—living into the six-fold covenant of Christ Church—all begins with faith. God’s Word says: “Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. By faith, we understand that the entire universe was formed at God’s command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen” (Hebrews 11:1-3).

Reading the Text

Read Hebrews 11:17-30

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

Reflection

Did you notice, “It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to share the oppression of God’s people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasure of sin. He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward” (Hebrews 11:24-25). There is nothing wrong with having wealth; the question is, does your wealth have you? The psalmist declares: “Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in Him!” (Psalm 34:8). There is something deeply satisfying about giving the Lord first-place in your heart. Put Christ first, and the Holy Spirit will help you put everything else in perspective. How have you found this to be true in your own life?

In Closing

As a fully-devoted follower of Christ we learn that discipleship is all about daily surrender. Each day, we *choose* to deny self and pick up our cross instead. Some days it is hard; but we look to Jesus and keep our eyes on Him. We see ourselves as stewards of *His* wealth and our income as a means to serve and glorify Him (and bless others!) We find out that if we hold on too tightly to the things of this world, we will lose it. But if we give control over to the nail-scarred hands of Jesus, we will gain sweet fellowship with the One who has loved us from the beginning.

Here is the Good News: You do not have to live under a curse. Declare this aloud: "All I have is yours, Lord. I say it again: All I have is a gift from you. Thank you, Lord!" The prophet Malachi says: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, 'I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!" (Malachi 3:10).

Close by reading together –

"Then those who feared the LORD spoke with each other, and the LORD listened to what they said. In His presence, a scroll of remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared Him and always thought about the honor of His name. 'They will be my people,' says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. On the day when I act in judgment, they will be my own special treasure. I will spare them as a father spares an obedient child" (Malachi 3:16-17).

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

One Year Bible Readings

November 13: Ezekiel 27:1-28:26, Hebrews 11:17-31, Psalm 111:1-10, Prov. 27:15-16
November 14: Ezekiel 29:1-30:26, Hebrews 11:32-12:13, Psalm 112:1-10, Prov. 27:17
November 15: Ezekiel 31:1-32:32, Hebrews 12:14-29, Ps. 113:1-114:8, Prov. 27:18-20
November 16: Ezekiel 33:1-34:31, Hebrews 13:1-25, Psalm 115:1-18, Proverbs 27:21-22
November 17: Ezekiel 35:1-36:38, James 1:1-18, Psalm 116:1-19, Proverbs 27:23-27
November 18: Ezekiel 37:1-38:23, James 1:19-2:17, Psalm 117:1-2, Proverbs 28:1
November 19: Ezekiel 39:1-40:27, James 2:18-3:18, Psalm 118:1-18, Proverbs 28:2

Joshua CELEBRATION

Text: Matthew 16:24-26, Hebrews 11:17-31

Plain Truth:

Christianity is _____ your whole self into
_____ Jesus for He has _____ his full
self into your _____.

1. Followers of Jesus _____ and faithfully _____ God.
2. Followers of Jesus _____ and give beyond
_____ with _____.
3. Committed servants _____ in _____.

November 13, 2022