

DIOCESE OF EVO

2014 ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL MANUAL

STUDY 1

GENERAL THEME: THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

SUB-THEME: “PORTRAIT OF THE KING”

TOPIC: HE EXISTED FROM THE BEGINNING

TEXT: Jn 1: 1- 5; Rev 1: 8, 2 Pet 3:8

AIM: To examine and encourage ourselves with the Truth of the eternal nature of our Lord Jesus.

INTRODUCTION: As mortal men who are limited by time, the concept of eternity is difficult to comprehend as we have to relate everything to time. The best we usually can resort to most times is to think of eternity as one living for a very long time or forever (the time matter comes up again).

However time was created by God as we see in Gen 1: 1 – 3, so he who created time cannot be limited by time. As the scripture declares in 2Pet 3:8 “One day to the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day”.

When John declared in John 1 that Jesus existed from the beginning, he was just saying that our Lord Jesus is eternal, He has no beginning or end, He has always existed, and He sees the end from the beginning.

We will in the course of this study examine this truth and seek to draw strength from it for our Christian journey.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What meaning do these words eternity, eternal, eternal life, eternal redemption, eternal judgment/damnation, convey to you?
2. What does each of the following passages convey to you about the eternal nature of our Lord Jesus Christ? Jn 1 : 1 – 3; 1 Jn 1:1; Rev 1: 8; Col 1: 16, 17
3. A manufacturer usually includes in the product packaging a manual prescribing the best way to use such product. Discuss how this relates to our relationship with our Lord Jesus?
4. What comfort/encouragement can we draw from the truth that our Lord Jesus existed from the beginning? Heb 1:2 – 3; Prov 8:22 – 31; Is 41:4; Is 46:9,10

CONCLUSION: We should as believers draw comfort and encouragement from the truth that our Lord Jesus existed from the beginning, and that all things were made by Him. He therefore knows why we were made, how we should live our lives and what the best use for our lives is, because he made it.

MEMORY VERSE: Rev 1:8a – I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Will you rely on the words of Him who existed from the beginning?

STUDY 2

SUB-THEME: “PORTRAIT OF THE KING”

Topic: HE IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

TEXT: Jn 6:22 – 70, Mat 6:33

AIM: To Show believers that all satisfaction we seek for life can be found exclusively in Christ.

Introduction:

Jesus had just fed five thousand men with five loaves of bread and two fishes. The next day multitudes crossed the sea in search of Him. He rebuked them for seeking Him just because of the bread He gave them the previous day, asking them to rather labour for that which does not perish. It was during this conversation that He revealed Himself to them as the Bread of life.

The multitude had their hearts focused on what would satisfy their stomach, but Jesus had to call their attention back to Himself as the only source of eternal satisfaction whom they should pursue.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Discuss the importance of bread (food), to physical life.
2. From the following passages identify what Jesus has promised concerning the bread which he gives. Jn 6: 30 – 35, 47 – 51. How do you think we can receive this bread that Jesus offers?
3. A crowd followed Jesus across the sea, but we read from Jn 6:60 -66 that many, including some of his disciples, left him. Why do you think they left? Are we in any danger of doing the same today? Mat 13: 44.
4. In what ways can we practically pursue the bread of life today?

CONCLUSION: A Christian song which has a line that says “O take the whole world but give me Jesus, I am satisfied, I am satisfied” is one which only a few Christians can convincingly sing these days. Men would rather pursue the world with all their might and give a few minutes to Jesus to soothe their conscience. Unfortunately the world offers no satisfaction to those who pursue it; it is a never ending pursuit.

Jesus calls us to come to Him for that bread which will satisfy us eternally. Come to Him today and eat to your fill.

MEMORY VERSE: Mat 6:33 “ But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you”.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Which bread are you laboring after, eternal or perishable?

STUDY 3

SUB-THEME: “PORTRAIT OF THE KING”

Topic: HE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

TEXT: Jn 8: 12, Is 9:2; 1Jn 1: 6, 7

AIM: To captivate the hearts of believers with the picture of Christ as the light of the world whom we must follow to navigate through the darkness of this world.

INTRODUCTION: The first thing God made at the beginning of creation was light, God looked at the shapeless, empty, dark world and declared “Let there be light”. It was after this that every other part of creation followed. This underscores the importance of light to man and the world in general. We can also see that, by nature, man and animals carry out most of their activities in daytime when there is light and retire to rest at night, when there is no light.

In the passage in focus, our Lord Jesus declares Himself to be the Light of the world. He proclaimed Himself as the only source of spiritual light available to mankind. We will in this study discover more about Christ as the light of world and what it means to us as believers.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Identify some of the important functions of light to man and to life generally?
2. Discuss from the following passages why the scriptures describe man and the world as being in darkness? Is 9:2; Job 12: 25; Rom 1: 21; Eph 4:18, 5: 8; Jn 3:19; Can you identify some effects of this darkness in the world?
3. From the following passages, what does Jesus offer to man and the world as light? Gen 1: 1 -3; Prov 6:23; Is 9:2, Lk 1:79; Jn 8: 12; Jn 11:9, 10.
4. How can we access these benefits offered by Jesus as our Light? Jn 12:35, 36.

CONCLUSION: The world we are in is a dark place ruled by Satan, the prince of darkness, and his forces, whom he deploys to ensure that the world and men remain ignorant of his schemes and fall into the snares he has laid out for them. It is by coming to Christ that we are translated from this kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of light. We need the light that Christ offers to enable us navigate the minefield of the world. It is by walking in the light of Christ that we find health, safety and prosperity.

MEMORY VERSE: Jn 8:12: I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you following the light of Christ in your daily life?

STUDY 4

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KING

TOPIC: HE IS THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

TEXT: Jn 10: 1 – 10; Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12

AIM: To draw our attention to the truth that Jesus is the only door to God's Sheepfold, and highlight what it means to us as believers.

INTRODUCTION: In ancient days, there were two kinds of sheep pens used to house and protect sheep for the night. One was the sheep pen found within towns which were usually built up with doors and walls, with a door keeper to guard the door; the other was usually built out in the fields and was just a rough circle of rocks with an opening for the sheep to enter through. There was usually no door, so the shepherd literally acted as a door by lying across the opening all through the night after the sheep had gone in.

It is in this context that Jesus declared Himself the door of the sheep. In this study, we would like to find out what He, being the door of the sheep, means for us.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Read the following passages Jn 10: 1 – 10; Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12
 - a. Identify what functions a door/gate performs in a building?
 - b. In the light of this, discuss what functions you see Christ performing for us as the door of the sheepfold
2. In Jn 10:7, 8 Our Lord Jesus said "I am the door of the sheep, all that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." To whom did Jesus refer as thieves and robbers? What qualified them as thieves and robbers? Do we have such today?
3. In practical terms what does it mean for one to enter into the sheepfold by the Door, which is Christ? Can you identify other ways by which men have tried to enter into the kingdom?
4. What assurances or promises do we have when we enter the kingdom through Jesus who is the door? What are the dangers inherent in attempting to enter through other doors?

CONCLUSION:

A door primarily provides an avenue for legitimate access into an enclosed space and, secondarily, provides some form of security to all who are within the enclosed space by providing a barrier against intruders. When our Lord Jesus calls Himself, the door to the sheep, and all who came before Him robbers and thieves, He is in effect saying that it is only by listening to what He says and following them that we may enter into the kingdom and find life. In the main text (Jn 10:8) He referred to the religious leaders of the day (Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees) who came before him as thieves and robbers as their teachings could not give life to their hearers. We still have such teachings today which promise much but do not offer life to those who hear them. We must be wary of such teachings and seek only to follow the teachings of Jesus, He alone is the door to life.

MEMORY VERSE: Jn 10:9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me he will go in and out and find pasture.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you entered the sheepfold by Jesus, the Door?

STUDY 5

SUB-THEME: “PORTRAIT OF THE KING”

TOPIC: HE IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

TEXT: Jn 10: 11 – 18, 27 - 30

AIM: To encourage us to put our trust in Christ’s care, the Good Shepherd, and not in the hirelings who swarm around us in droves.

INTRODUCTION: Sheep are the most helpless of all domesticated creatures as they do not have any natural capacity to defend themselves against predators. They are usually totally dependent on the shepherd who protects them with care and compassion. Shepherds are to find good pastures and still waters and lead the sheep to feed there. Sometimes the shepherd might have to put his own life on the line just so he can protect the sheep (1 Sam 17:34, 35). In this passage Jesus contrasts Himself (the Good Shepherd) with those whom He referred to as hirelings. In a world filled more with hirelings who wear the toga of shepherds, it is easy for us as men to view our Lord Jesus as being of the same character with these hirelings. In this study we will strive to grasp the true picture of Christ as the Good Shepherd.

STUDY GUIDE:

- 1 List some characteristics that sheep are known for. Why do you think Jesus would liken His followers to sheep?
2. Read the following passages Jn 10: 11- 18; Jer 23: 1- 8; Lk 15; 4-7 (a) Describe who a shepherd is? (b) Identify what differentiates a good shepherd from a bad one (hireling)?
3. Discuss what expectations we can confidently have of Jesus as the Good Shepherd in relation to dangers and challenges we face in life. Ps 23: 1 – 3; Jn 10: 11 – 12, 28 - 29; Is 43: 1, 2?
4. What then is expected of us as sheep of his flock seeing we have such a good shepherd caring for us? Jn. 10: 3, 4, 27; 14:1, 27

CONCLUSION: Our Lord Jesus likened us believers to sheep, and Himself as the Shepherd. This means that the same way sheep follow the shepherd without questioning, and depends on him for all provision, guidance and protection, we should follow Him. As believers we most times look at our Lord Jesus through the prism of our interactions with those who were meant to act as earthly shepherds to us (parents, pastors, teachers etc). We unconsciously tend to believe that the same failures/weaknesses they exhibit we will also see in Christ. In this study Christ assures us that unlike our worldly shepherds, He will care for and protect us. We only need to hear Him and follow His voice and go wherever He leads us. It is there that we are assured of good pasture, still waters and protection from wolves and lions that seek to devour us.

MEMORY VERSE: Ps. 23: 1. The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you following Jesus as a sheep?

STUDY 6

SUB THEME: THE PORTRAIT OF THE KING

TOPIC: HE IS THE BUILDER OF HIS CHURCH

TEXT: MATTHEW 16:13-19

AIM: To remind God's people that Jesus is the bona fide owner of the Church and, therefore, must be accorded pre-eminence in every activity or project of the Church.

INTRODUCTION: The word Church, from the Greek word 'ecclesia', refers to a body of people called out from the world by Jesus Christ Himself; a people sanctified or set apart by Him and to whom God has chosen to reveal His Son; a distinct society, composed of true believers, known as the body and bride of Christ. Jesus' proclamation in Matthew 16:18 clearly portrays Him as the builder of the Church and the very foundation (the Rock) on whom the Church is built. The Church herself is His workmanship, anchored on the pillar and ground of the truth, the confession that Jesus is the Christ. And it is to be clearly noted that He is chiefly responsible for the ultimate administration and security of His Church and should therefore be acknowledged and given pre-eminence in the same at all times.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. 'And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter (petros) , and upon this rock (petra) I will build my Church..' Matthew 16:18. Analyse this statement in the light of the following Scriptures; Matthew 21; 42, 1 Corinthians 3; 11, Ephesians 2; 19-22, 1 Peter 2; 4-6
2. Describe the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church He built. Matthew 16:18, Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 1:22,23,25, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 5:23,29,30.
3. What is the mission of this Church built by Jesus? Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-18, Acts 1:8, 13:1-3, Ephesians 3:9-11, Acts 20:28-32, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Peter 2:9.
4. 'Jesus said, and I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven...' Matthew 18:19. What are these keys and what purpose are they meant to serve?

CONCLUSION: The Church of Jesus Christ has been aptly described as a spiritual body, ruled over by a spiritual head, governed by a spiritual law, and functions in spiritual matters such as worship, fellowship, missions and every other work assigned to her by Christ. It must be strongly stated therefore, that any assembly that is not built on Him, and whose programs and projects are not anchored on Him does not belong to Him.

MEMORY VERSE: And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Matthew 16:18.

STUDY 7

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KING

TOPIC: HE IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

AIM: To Help Us Understand That Jesus Is The Only True Source, Restorer And Sustainer Of Life.

INTRODUCTION: Martha and her Sister Mary were evidently devastated by the death of their only brother Lazarus, but they were, more so, probably disappointed that the one whom they had loved and trusted very much seemed to have abandoned them when it mattered most. Lord, said Martha, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died'. So, even if they couldn't openly reproach Him, it seemed reasonable enough to gently express their disappointment and frustration at His not too encouraging response to their plight. Not even Jesus' swift reassurance that all hope was not lost could calm their immediate frustration; it seemed to convey that the resurrection was still so far in the future.

However, for Jesus, the scenario was a perfect opportunity to reveal to these friends and disciples around a very significant aspect of His identity. It was a revelation which should both open their eyes to His unlimited authority and power over death and hades and, therefore, radically transform their very lives and approach to Kingdom life and business. Jesus' assertion to Martha; 'I am the resurrection and the life...' was a bold declaration that He has the divine ability to impart, restore and sustain life. 'For in Him was life...' and, 'as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will'.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What did Jesus mean when He said 'I am the Resurrection and the Life? John 11:25, 26, 1:4, 1 John 5:11,12, 1 Corinthians 15:53-57, John 11:43, 2 Timothy 1:10.
2. Why is the doctrine of the Resurrection so fundamental to the Christian faith? John 11:25-27, 1 Corinthians 15:13-22, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
3. 'He who believes in me will live even though he dies, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die'. Explain this statement in the light of the following scriptures; John 11:43,44, 3:16, 6:47-51, 53-58.
4. What is the place of faith in the overall picture of Jesus Christ as the Resurrection and the Life? John 11:26,39-44, Hebrews 11:6, 1 John 5:1,4&5.

CONCLUSION: The fear of death is perhaps the most dreadful thing we face in life. But as we come to understand the eternal truth that Jesus holds and has ultimate control of the keys of death and hades, in addition to being the source, sustainer and restorer of life to all who look up to and rely wholly on Him, we shall find strength and reassurance in that ageless truth; 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.'

MEMORY VERSE: 'Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? John 11:25,26

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you sincerely believe that Jesus is the source, restorer and sustainer of life?

STUDY 8

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KING

TOPIC: HE IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE -1

AIM: To help Christians understand that Jesus is the only true way to God and that any effort to access the Kingdom of God through any other way is a futile exercise.

INTRODUCTION:

There came a point in the life of Jesus and His disciples where He thought it expedient to reassure them that beyond the troubles, miseries and disillusionment that awaited them due to His impending betrayal, suffering and death lay a glorious eternity, a set time of re-union with the Master at the bosom of the Father. The disciples had every reason to despair, having just heard from the Master certain hard revelations that seemed to further compound the confusion which characterized their existing faith in and relationship with the Lord. But Jesus admonished them not to fear or be dismayed by any of these problems because it was all for their ultimate benefit.

Like the Master, the disciples were all heading toward a destination, the Father's house. It is an expansive house with many mansions. Only bona fide sons and daughters of the Kingdom will qualify to enjoy its inestimable comfort. But there is only one access road to this house. Jesus said; 'I am the Way...No man cometh unto the Father but by me'. John 14:6. This is to say, that any attempt to access the Father through any other way is and shall ever be an exercise in futility.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. 'Let not your hearts be troubled...' John 14:1a. Why was this admonition necessary, and how does it relate to Christians today? Job 14:1,2, John 14:1,6, 10:10, Mark 10:23-30.
2. What do you really understand by Jesus' assertion; 'I am the Way...?' John 14:6, 10:7-9, 1 Tim. 2:5, Ephesians 2:18.
3. Is Jesus truly the only Way? Discuss. John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Timothy 2:5,6, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 9:15.
4. If you sincerely believe that Jesus is the only way to the Father, what does this mean for all of the beliefs in the world that say there are other ways? Read John 10:7-10, Isaiah 44:19,20, Romans 1:18-25, John 3:18,19.

CONCLUSION:

It is imperative to remind us that there are not many ways to heaven. There is only one way. And our Lord's words should never be forgotten; 'There is no way to the Father but by me.' Faith in Jesus Christ is the key to heaven. He that believes in Him is on the right road.

MEMORY VERSE! 'Jesus saith unto Him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me'. John 14:6

EXAMINE YOURSELF: If you sincerely believe that Jesus is the only way to God the Father, what do you do about getting people to Him?

STUDY 9

SUB-THEME: The portrait of the King

TOPIC: He is the Way, the Truth and the Life- 2

TEXT: John 14:6-11

AIM: To stir a longing and hunger in pursuing nothing but the truth which is able to set men free even amidst the ever increasing decline of justice in our time.

INTRODUCTION: In our previous study, we have been able to establish that Jesus is the only way that leads to the Father- the God of righteousness. In this study we will critically examine the Truth as it relates to our walk with God who is the only true God. This study is very important in the sense that, we are living in an era that typifies what Isaiah 59:14-15 said; “Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So truth fails, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice”. In every segment of our society; politics, education, economics, commerce, etc. including religious circles, it is imperative to note that truth has almost gone into extinction.

Our main text (John 14:6) categorically portrays Jesus as not just one of the true messengers of God. He is the Truth personified. All who ever came before him, John 10:8 declares, are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them! The knowledge of Christ, the Truth, is the only key to the redemption of mankind.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Just as Pilate asked the Lord Jesus in John 18:38; ‘What is Truth?’
2. What are the attributes of the Truth from the following scriptures: Psalms 40:11; Psalms 43:3; Psalms 117:2,146:6, John 8:32,
3. What is the implication of this statement; “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matt24:24).
b) What should be our attitude as Christians in this regard (John 4:24, Roman 8:26, Rev 2:2, 1John4:1, 1Cor14:29, 1 Thess.5:21, Pr 23:23).
4. What are the consequences of not walking in the truth? Heb.10:26, James4:17b, 2Thess2:10-12, 2 Tim 4:2-5, 2 Peter 2:1.

CONCLUSION: Truth is a very essential part of life. It is an obvious fact. Prov. 23:23 says; Buy the truth, and sell it not. Truth preserves, endures forever and delivers. Jesus is the Truth. Once truth is out of place in any society men will become gullible to deception, and disaster will be inevitable.

MEMORY VERSE: John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

EXAMINE YOURSELF:

STUDY 10

TOPIC: He is the way the truth and the life- 3

TEXT: John 14:6

AIM: To remind us that apart from the life in Christ, there is no hope of eternal life elsewhere in the universe.

INTRODUCTION: In the previous study, we clearly noted that Jesus is the truth. In this study our focus will be on Jesus as ‘the Life’. Life is the most essential thing in the universe. Nothing functions where there is no life. Everything on earth is anchored on life, which is the very essence of man. From creation, God in His wisdom planted the tree of life in the midst of the garden. (Genesis 2:9). Once Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they were deprived access to this tree. In the last chapter of the book of Revelation, in verse 2, the scripture clearly points out that in the midst of the streets of the New Jerusalem was the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. It is only those that do God’s commandments that have the right to this tree of life (Rev.2:7, 22:14). In Christ is this very life. Beside him there is no life (John 1:4).

STUDY GUIDE

- 1) What do you think Jesus meant when he said; ‘I am the Life’?
- 2) What was the teaching of Jesus Christ about Life from the following scriptures;
Matt.6:25,7:14,10:39,18:8-9, Luke8:14, John1:4, 5:24,40, John 6:35, Rev.2:7,10, 11:11,17:8,21:6)
- 3) In the light of the following scriptures; (Matt.20:28, John12:24, 1John3:16, John 14:19) Why do you think Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many?
- 4) From the following passages (John 3:14-16, Luke 18:18-30) what did Jesus say are the criteria for inheriting eternal life.

b) Can you categorically say that Jesus instructions in Luke 18:18-30 are aptly being practiced today? Discuss?

CONCLUSION: Life is the whole essence of man. Nothing functions where there is no life. In Christ is life. We live because he lives and we have hope of eternal life because he resurrected. To inherit eternal life, we must believe in Jesus as the author of eternal life. We must be willing to lose our life for the sake of Christ if we must gain it. Also we must be willing to lay down our lives for our brethren just as our Lord Jesus did.

MEMORY VERSE: John 14:19b; ‘Because I live, ye shall live also’.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Can you sincerely say you have found this life that is in Christ alone?

STUDY 11

TOPIC: He is the true Vine

TEXT: John 15:1-10

AIM: To illuminate our minds on the true picture of Christ's union with believers and the Father, as well as critically analyze the dangers of not abiding in Christ, with the view of effecting necessary changes.

INTRODUCTION: Vine is a plant with a weak stem that derives its support from climbing, twinning or creeping along a surface. It bears grapes, which happened to be one of the most valuable fruits in the world. Its noble fruits are mainly used for the production of wines (Gen 40:9-11, Judges 9:13). Just as the Lord chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor.1:27), so the Lord equally chose the vine, a valuable plant with a weak stem to explain a very important truth about the union of human and divine natures, as well as the fullness of the spirit that is in Christ Jesus, the only true vine.

As the root of the vine is hid from the eyes, so our lives are hid with Christ in God (Col.3:3). As the root bears the tree, diffuses sap to it, so Christians (the branches) derives their support and supplies from Christ, whereas the Father is the husbandman who watches over the vineyard (the church) to ensure maximum fruitfulness.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1) What did Jesus mean when he said in John 15: 1; 'I am the True Vine'?
- 2) Identify the various categories of vines mentioned in the bible from the following passages : (Gen.49:11, Lev.25:11, Deut.32:32, 2Kings 4:39, Psalm 80:8, 128:3, Song 6:11, Isaiah 5:2, 24:7, Jere.2:21, Ezek17:8, Joel1:7, 1:12, Nahum2:2, John 15:1)
- 3) From the following scriptures (Gen.49:11, 1Kings 4:25, Hosea 14:7, Joel 2:22, Micah 4:4, Zech. 8:12, Hosea 14:17, Matt.26:29) outline the qualities of the vine that necessitated this expression by of our Lord Jesus; 'I am the true vine'.
- 4) In what practical ways can Christians (branches) abide and continually bear fruits in Christ -the only true vine (John15:1-10)?
- 5) Read Jere.2:21, Ezek.15:2-7, Isaiah 5:1-7, Jere.12:10-13 and analyze the dangers of not abiding/bearing fruits in Christ- the only True vine?

CONCLUSION: Vine, as a plant, has maintained its value for ages. Jesus said; I am the vine and ye are the branches, and my father is the husbandman (John 15:1). Every vineyard dresser looks forward to having the choicest grapes from his vine via the branches. Wild, empty and marred vine are always an offense to the husbandman. So it is with Lord when we Christians (the branches) are not yielding the desired fruits. God looks forward to seeing us bear the desired fruits; Christian temperament, disposition and life generally. Not bearing fruits results in being annihilated from Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: John15:5; 'I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing'.

STUDY 12

TOPIC: He is the Great High Priest:

TEXT Heb 7:15-28; 8:1-6

AIM: To understand the significance of the Priesthood of the King.

INTRODUCTION: The Great High Priest is one of the many titles applied to our Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:17; 4:14). He is also referred to as the Messiah, Saviour, Son of God, Son of Man, Friend of Sinners, etc. Each one focuses on a particular aspect of who He is and what that means for mankind. The word “priest” means one who mediates in religious services. It also means one who is holy or set apart to perform those services.

In the Bible, we learn that priests plead the people’s case before God by offering the many sacrifices that the law required. Among the priests, one was selected as the High Priest, and it was he who entered the Most Holy Place once a year on the Day of Atonement to place the blood of the sacrifice on the Ark of the Covenant (Hebrews 9:7). By these daily and yearly sacrifices, the sins of the people were temporarily covered.

When Jesus Christ is called our Great High Priest, it is with reference to previous priesthods. Like Melchizedek, He is ordained an uncommon Priest not under the Law given on Mount Sinai (Hebrews 5:6). Like the Levitical priests, Jesus offered a sacrifice to satisfy the Law of God when He offered Himself for our sins (Hebrews 7:27). This same Jesus is the Priest King in whose Kingdom we reign. This study will be geared to unveiling the significance of His Priesthood to His saints.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Read the following passages and identify why Jesus Christ is called THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST:
Heb 2:9; 5:5-6; 7:23-26; and Rom 8:34.
2. Of what significance to us is the Priesthood of Jesus Christ? See Isa 53:4-6; Heb 4:14; 8:3-6; 9:11-12, 23-28
3. In the light of the above:
 - a. How should we profitably relate with Him?
 - b. What do we stand to lose if we fail to acknowledge and relate with Him in this light?

CONCLUSION: The excellence of our Great High Priest and his qualifications should stir and stimulate us to hold fast faith in him. Why? Because no one could be more committed to our good, no one could be better qualified; no one more equipped to represent us in the presence of God; no one else qualified to obtain eternal salvation for us. To scorn, reject or turn aside from this Great High Priest is to trample upon our only hope for eternal redemption.

MEMORY VERSE: Isa 53:11b - And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. NLT.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What does it mean to you that Jesus is your great high priest?

STUDY 13

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the King

TOPIC: He is the Soon Coming King

TEXT: Rev.3:11; 22:7-20

AIM: To encourage believers with the fact that Christ will soon come as a King to reign over the earth.

INTRODUCTION: Two popular pictorial representations of Christ we see in the world today are one that portrays Him as a helpless baby and another that shows Him as crucified and hanging helpless on the cross. In an advert driven world, where convictions and beliefs are mostly driven by what we see, men are prone to lose sight of the fact of the authority of Jesus over all things in heavens, on earth and underneath the earth (Phil 2:9, 10) as Lord and King to whom all must bow.

In this study we will seek the help of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the full picture of Christ as our soon coming King.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What meaning do these words convey to you? King, Kingdom, Authority, Pre-eminence, sovereign, dominion.
2. What do these passages reveal to us about the person of our Lord Jesus? Phil 2: 9 – 11; Col 1: 13 – 18; 1Tim 6:15
3. Who in these parables is being portrayed as a king? What does each of these parables teach about the character of our Lord Jesus and what he will be returning to do.
 - a. Marriage Feast – Mat 22:2 -9
 - b. Talents – Mat 25:14 – 19
 - c. Goats and Sheep – Mat 25: 31 – 37, 41-43
4. What then should be our response to the fact of our Lord Jesus coming back soon as a king. Jn 14: 1 – 3; Rev 3:11; 22:7

CONCLUSION: In many of his parables, our Lord Jesus portrayed Himself as a king who had travelled, but later came back to His Kingdom to reward those who had done well and to punish those who lived in disobedience. We must recognize the fact that as believers we are now citizens of another kingdom and subjects to the King of all Kings who we are under obligation to obey. We must also live in the awareness that He is coming soon to put to an end the kingdom of this world and take us to His everlasting kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE: Rev 22:7 - Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Do you know Him as your King; does your life show that?

STUDY 14

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the King

TOPIC: HE GIVES THE FREE GIFT OF SALVATION

TEXT: Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-19

AIM: *To teach us that salvation is a free and indispensable gift of God all mankind.*

INTRODUCTION:

Salvation means “the saving of a person’s soul from sin and its consequences; a way of avoiding loss, disaster, etc.” Salvation is aimed at delivering men from worldly regrets and eternal damnation. We were all born into sin. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel confessed: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me,” In this sinful estate, man cannot have access to, and communion, with God; thus, the necessity of salvation.

As we look at the life of Saul of Tarsus in this study, we shall learn that no soul is irredeemable no matter how far such soul has gone in sinning against God, and that we have been saved so as to serve God the remaining years of our lives.

STUDY GUIDE

1. a) What was Saul’s sinful estate before he was saved? Acts 8:1; 9:1-2.
b) What do we learn from this encounter about the gift of salvation? Acts 9:13-15; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom 3:27-31, 4:16, Titus 3:4-7.
2. What could you say is God’s primary reason for saving mankind? Acts 9:13-15; Exodus 8:1.
3. Discuss the place of “works” in God’s plan of salvation? James 2:18-26, Titus 3:8.
4. Discuss the danger of working for God without first having experienced God’s gift of salvation.

CONCLUSION

Salvation is essential both for time and eternity. It is the only ticket that will usher us into God’s kingdom. Without it we are without hope in this life.

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 4:12 – Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you been saved? How do you know?

STUDY 15

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the Kingdom

TOPIC: The Kingdom as already here

TEXT: Matt.12:28; Lk.11:20; Col.1:13

AIM: To excite the heart of believers with the fact that we are already citizens of the kingdom here on earth.

INTRODUCTION: Our Lord Jesus and John the Baptist both started the same message, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mat 3:2; 4:17), pointing men away from the kingdom of this world, to the existence of another kingdom which they can be part of. The teachings of our Lord Jesus on earth (the Sermon on the Mount and his parables) focused on revealing truths about the nature and principles of this new kingdom. Upon His death on the cross, He opened the way for men to enter into life in the kingdom. In this study we will be examining this kingdom to see how it exists here on earth and what it means for us as believers.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What do you understand by the term kingdom?

(b)What are the characteristic features of a kingdom?

(c)What usually qualifies one to be a member of a kingdom?

2. Read Col 1:12, 13 how many kingdoms can you identify in the passage, name them? Who are the rulers and citizens of these kingdoms? Eph 2:19,20
3. What do these passages teach us about entering and living in the kingdom of God? Lk16:6; 18:17; Jn 3:5; Col 1:12,13; Mat 5:3,10; 7:21, 1 Cor 6:9 – 11
4. From the following passages what benefits/privileges do we derive here on earth for being citizens of the Kingdom of God? Mat 13:11; Lk 11:2; Mk 10:29; Lk 10:19; Rom 5:1,2; 1 Cor 2:12; Eph 1: 13,14; 2 Pet 1:2-4

CONCLUSION

A kingdom can be described as a territory over which a king has supreme authority, in which the citizens of the kingdom are under the rule of the king. Any incursion by a foreign agent into the kingdom (by attacking a citizen or encroaching into the territory) is viewed as an act of war against the king of the kingdom and to which the king usually responds with every weapon in his arsenal.

As believers we have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ; we have Him as our King and Ruler, so we need not have any fear of the enemy as He will protect us from every such attack. As citizens we must abide by the laws and principles of the kingdom. It is as we do this that we continue to enjoy the many privileges and benefits that accrue from being members of the kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE: Col 1:13 “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Have you been living as a citizen of the Kingdom of God?

STUDY 16

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the Kingdom

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM AS IN THE FUTURE

TEXT: LUKE 9:27; MATT. 10:23

AIM: To teach us that the Kingdom of God is a reality and is at hand

INTRODUCTION:

Many “Christians” do not want to hear about the coming of Jesus particularly in our generation. Messages about the second coming of the Lord are seen as obsolete and outdated. Messages that are readily welcome are those that concentrate on making people happy and comfortable in this world.

In the midst of all these, there is the need for something that will remind us that Jesus will come again. Hell is a reality as much as heaven is and it is only those who have got themselves prepared that will inherit the kingdom of God.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. a. Discuss the reality of the kingdom of God and hell fire in the light of the following passage: Luke 16: 19 - 31
b. What does it take to enter the kingdom of God? Mark 1:15; Luke 3:7-14; Matt. 25:31-36.
2. What is the scriptural evidence that the return of the Lord is very close? Revelation 1:7, 3:11, 22:7,12
3. When exactly are we expecting the Lord’s return? Matthew 24:27,36, 25:13, Acts 1:6,7
(b) What will be the nature of His return? 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 2 Peter 3:10, Matthew 24:30,31, 25:31,32
4. What is the Lord coming back to the earth to do? John 14:2,3, Revelation 22:12, Matthew 25:31-46
5. How are God’s children admonished to respond to the whole issue of the Lord’s coming? 1 Corinthians 15:58, 1 John 2:28, 3:2,3, Revelation 22:7

CONCLUSION:

From current global indications, it is very clear that the return of the King is very close. Unfortunately, many Kingdom subjects have been so strongly captivated by the pervading “bread and butter gospel” messages blasting off many churches’ and ministries’ pulpits, radio and television programmes that any message on the King’s return is literally reacted to with utmost disdain. But the truth is that the return of the King is almost here with us. Therefore, every bona fide subject of the King should live everyday as if it is the very last before the King suddenly reappears.

MEMORY VERSE:

1 Thessalonians 5:2,4 “For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night... but you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day shall surprise you like a thief”.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: If the King should suddenly appear now, do you sincerely think you are ready for Him?

STUDY 17

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the Kingdom

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM HAS A POWER SOURCE

TEXT: JOHN 16:5- 15; Mat 3:16, 17; Acts 1:8

AIM: To highlight the key need for the believers to be connected to the power source of the kingdom.

INTRODUCTION:

As Jesus' ministry on earth was coming to an end, He thought it expedient to prepare the mind of his disciples, and to reveal to them certain facts which they must know so that His departure will not be a huge shock to them and leave them in despair. He revealed to them the source of the enormous power with which he operated while on earth (the Holy Spirit), with the promise that He will send Him to them when He leaves.

On the day of His departure, he warned them not to go out to do anything until they have received this power through the agency of the Holy Spirit Whom the Father would bestow upon them.

In this study we shall strive to acquaint ourselves with this power source of the kingdom and to see how utterly useless we, as Christians, are without Him.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Who did Jesus introduce to His disciples as the source of the power of the kingdom? Jn 16:13; 14:16,17; Acts 1:4,8
2. What necessary steps are people required to take so they may be effectively connected to this power source? Jn 1:12; 3:3-8; 15:5; Lk 11:13; Acts 1:4
3. Why is it absolutely necessary for citizens of the kingdom to be connected to this power source? Jn 6:63; 16: 13; 14: 16 – 18; Rom 8: 5 – 14; Ez 36:27
4. How do I know that I am effectively connected to the power source? Rom 8:9-14; Gal 5:16 - 25; Acts 10:19,20; 16:6
5. Are there some other fake, 'alternative' power sources from which men tap power? What is the implication of this for the individual Christian and the church? Acts 8:9,18,19

CONCLUSION:

Apostle Paul had more than enough reason to boldly declare that the kingdom of God is not in talking, but in the demonstration of power. This power is not however limited to casting out demons, healings and working of miracles as many are wont to believe. It is the divine enablement upon us to live the new life which we have received from Christ, and by which we effectively witness for Him. The true Christian life is impossible without the help of the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you plugged in to the genuine power source?

STUDY 18

SUB - THEME: THE KINGDOM HAS A MANUAL

Text: 2Tim.3:10-17

Aim: To highlight the importance of the word of God as a manual for citizens of the kingdom

INTRODUCTION: For appropriate and effective operation of our appliances, one needs to study the instruction manual as a guide, which is the only way to understand how to use it. So it is with the kingdom of God. The principles and conditions for which we can access God's kingdom are all written down in the Holy Scriptures. Without the study and practice of the word of God, our lives will be filled with error, and this may, most likely, make us miss out from God's kingdom. We know more about God and can walk with Him through the scriptures.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What do you understand by the term 'kingdom manual'?
2. How may we expose ourselves to this kingdom manual? 2Tim. 2:15; 1Tim.4:11-14; Josh.1:8; 2Cor.8:5; Rom.1:9-11; 2Cor.6:17-18; Phil.2:12-14; 1Cor.10:7-11; Rom.8:6-8; 2Tim.3:10-17; Rom.6:11-14.
3. Can a believer operate without the kingdom manual? Rom.1:28-32; 1Cor.11:2; 1Cor.15:58; Rom. 1:21-24; 2Tim.2:15.
4. How does God feel when we refuse to operate by the kingdom manual? Rom.1:21-24; Rom.2:7-8; Rom.6:22-23; 1Cor.15:33-34; Eph.5:5-9.

CONCLUSION: No true child of God can relate with God without His word for it is through His word we gain knowledge about Him. The word of God reveals God and exposes us to the detailed requisites of His will concerning our lives.

MEMORY VERSE: "All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuilding, correction and training in righteousness. 2Tim.3:16. (NIV)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Am I walking in the light of the kingdom manual?

STUDY 19

SUB -THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: The Kingdom As An Eternal Resting Place For The Saints.

Text: Luke 16:19-26; Rev.6:9-11; Jn 14:1-3

INTRODUCTION: We are expected to be conscious of the fact that, here (the earth) is not our resting place or where we will spend eternity. Heaven awaits the saints while hell awaits the ungodly. Our activities here on earth will determine where we spend eternity. When our time here on earth expires, all our activities shall be brought to judgment to decide what reward shall be given to us. The church is called to order, peradventure she is not kingdom-minded, and advised to disengage from all corrupt practices that lead to eternal damnation. The kingdom means heaven, an eternal resting place for the saints.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What do you understand by the term 'eternal resting place'? How would you explain this rest in the kingdom?
2. What will qualify a person to enter into this rest in the kingdom? John 3:3, 3:18, 3:15
3. What activities can stop us from having this kingdom rest? Rom. 1:18; Rom.21:24; Rom.1:29-32; Eph.5:3-6
4. What are the benefits of having this kingdom rest? 1Cor.15:58; Matt.25:34; John 3:5; 1Cor.6:9;

CONCLUSION:

Gaining uninhibited access in the eternal rest promised to all kingdom subjects should be the believers' utmost priority. **This rest begins here on earth through a conscious yielding to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and can be sustained for all eternity through a conscientious daily walk with Him.**

MEMORY VERSE: If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.
1Cor. 15:19 (NIV)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you looking forward to this eternal rest?

STUDY 20

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM IN PARABLES: THE SOWER

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18 – 23

AIM: To call the brethren's attention to the fact that the Word of God is able to work optimally in any heart fully conditioned to effectively receive and appropriate it.

INTRODUCTION

True to His character, Jesus sought to use the parable of the Sower to call His disciples' attention to the fact that the condition of the heart is a very significant factor in the overall prosperity, or otherwise, of the Word of God that is preached, received, processed and acted upon at any given time. In this parable, He describes four significant states of the heart and the four different responses to the word, or the kind of results to be expected from such heart conditions whenever they come in contact with the Word of God. Only one out of the four has the potential to produce the desired fruits. The other three have nothing good to show for the word investment on them.

We shall in this study, analyze this parable in the light of the pervading experiences in our local churches and across the body of Christ in our generation and how it can be best applied for the optimal benefit of the Kingdom life and business.

STUDY GUIDE

1. With direct reference to your church, identify and explain the different kinds of soil mentioned in the Parable of the Sower. Luke 8:11-15
2. Is there any hope for the first three kinds of soil (hearts) mentioned in this parable? Discuss.
(b) What is required to make them productive? Luke 8:15, Joshua 1:8, 1 Peter 2:2
3. (a) What message does the truth highlighted in this parable have for the ministers of the gospel in any given congregation? 1 Timothy 2:15,24-26, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, 1 Timothy 4:13.
(b) What message does it have for every child of God?

CONCLUSION

The word of God is living and active. It is a veritable tool for the transformation of lives and edification of believers. When and wherever it is effectively invested, digested and appropriated, it brings positive turn around in every life's situation or circumstance.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Timothy 4:13 "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What value do you place on the Word of God?

STUDY 21

SUB-THEME: “PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM”

TOPIC: The Kingdom Parables-The Wheat and the Tares

Text: Mat. 13:24-30, 36-43.

AIM: To highlight the reason for the mixed multitude in the church and the scriptural prescription on how to effectively manage the situation for now.

INTRODUCTION: The church, from the Greek word ‘ekklesia’, means “called out”. This points to the fact that the believers are a group of people called out from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God.

In this parable our Lord Jesus paints a portrait of the kingdom of God (the church) as it exists in the world. It tells of how the prince of this world strives to infiltrate God’s kingdom on earth by flooding the church with all shades and colours of the agents of his dark kingdom. We will see from this study how our Lord Jesus expects us to handle this dicey situation in the church, and what his expectation is of us, his children in the world.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Read the parables of the wheat and tares again. Mat 13:24 – 30, 36 – 43.
 - a. Identify who the following were from the parable (the sower, the field, the wheat, the tares, the enemy who sowed the tares)
 - b. State at least 2 lessons we learn from the parable about; (i) Our Lord Jesus, (ii) The Church, (iii) Children of the Kingdom, (iv) Satan.
2. Why did the master not want the tares uprooted immediately as the servants suggested? Matt. 13; 29
3. The master’s command implied the servants may not be able to easily distinguish the wheat from the tares at that stage of their growth. Why do you think this was so. What lesson does it have for church leadership?
4. The master asked the servants to wait until harvest before the separation could be effected. What is the implication of this reality for the wheat?

CONCLUSION

From our Lord Jesus explanation of the parable, we learn that He is the sower, and the seed the children of the kingdom, the field is the world and the enemy and bad seed, satan and his children. We also learn from the parable that our Lord Jesus is the one who brings in men into his kingdom.

From the command not to uproot the tares, we see the care that the Lord have for believers, that He is not ready to loose even one who at the moment resembles a tare, but is willing to allow it to grow, knowing that at maturity, it may bear fruits for the kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE

Mat 13:29,30a: No, he replied, you’ll uproot the wheat if you do. Let both grow together until the harvest.

EXAMINE YOURSELF

Which one are you, wheat or tare?

STUDY 22

SUB-THEME: “PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM”

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM IN PARABLES: MUSTARD SEED AND LEAVEN

TEXT: Matthew 13:31-33

AIM: *To teach us that the kingdom of God worth’s working and living for, and that we must commit our all to attain it.*

INTRODUCTION:

In Matthew chapter 13, Jesus used various parables to illustrate the kingdom of God. In the parable of the mustard seed, the Lord shows us that the kingdom of God seemingly had insignificant beginnings, being introduced by the “despised” and ‘rejected,’ (Jesus and his twelve “unimpressive” disciples). But a day will come when its greatness and power will be seen by the whole world.

Again in the parable of the leaven (yeast); just as the leaven permeates a batch of dough, so the kingdom of heaven spreads through a person’s life. It equally signifies the growth of the kingdom by the inner working of the Holy Spirit. Those who despised its “little” beginning will have themselves to blame at last.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. a) What do you know about the mustard seed? Matt. 13:32.
b) How would it be likened to the kingdom of God?
c) Suggest ways through which Christians could contribute to the expansion of God’s kingdom.
2. How does the parable of the yeast relate to the kingdom of God? Matt. 13:33.
b) Read 1Cor. 5:6. In the light of this passage, discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the yeast as it affects the body of Christ.
3. What must we do to depopulate the kingdom of Satan and to expand the kingdom of God?

CONCLUSION

The preaching about God’s kingdom may seem unpopular and unattractive, but at the fullness of time, those who stood by it will rejoice and those who despised it will regret.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

Do not despise the day of little beginning Zech. 4:10.

STUDY 23

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the Kingdom

Text: Matt.13:44-46; 6:33

The Kingdom in Parables: The Hidden Treasure and Pearl of great Value

Aim: To captivate the heart of believers with the priceless value of the kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION: Treasure can be described as something that is of great value or great worth, meaning that to obtain it, you have to pay a great deal, and even when you have possessed it you must be ready to do whatever it takes to retain it. Pearls are precious stones of great value and are rare to find. In these two parables, our Lord Jesus sought to open the eyes of His disciples (believers) to the value they must place on the kingdom of God if they are to find and retain it.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Can you list out some things that you regard as treasure to you? What in these things make them of great value to you? How did you obtain this treasure, what have you done to ensure it is not taken away from you?
2. What do the following passages reveal to us about the value of the kingdom of God? Mat 6:33; Mk 9:47; 1 Cor 9:23-27
3. In the two parables under study, we see that the person had to search and find something of great value, and then sold all that he had to buy it. What meaning does this hold for us as believers in the world of today?
4. What dangers await us as believers if we do not place the greatest value on the Kingdom of God? Heb 12: 16,17; 1 Cor 10: 1- 12; 1 Tim 1: 18 – 20

CONCLUSION:

Our salvation is precious and is worth more than any other thing in the world. It is lack of appreciation of this fact that has led to the present decadence we find in Christendom today. Believers are involved in all kinds of corruption in political and economic spheres, using underhand means to aggrandize themselves. We must cry to God to help us see what men like Paul, Stephen, Peter etc, saw that made them willing to give up their lives for the kingdom. Our pathway cannot be different.

MEMORY VERSE: Mk 9:47 “And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What are you willing to give up for the kingdom?

STUDY 24

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the Kingdom

Text: Matthew 13:47-50

TOPIC: The kingdom in parables: The Dragnet

Aim: To help the church see the realities of the judgement day (end time)

INTRODUCTION: The dragnet is commonly used among fishermen who, in the process of fishing, gather fishes of different kinds and then, at the shore, begin to sort out the different kinds of fish. The parable of the dragnet has the same meaning as the parable of the wheat and tares. We are to obey God and tell others about His grace and goodness. It is not in our power to dictate or judge who is, or who is not a part of the kingdom of God. This sorting will be done at the judgment day by those God has ordained for this purpose. This study will help us in identify our limits as Christians to the society and our position on the judgment day.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1 Describe the “Dragnet” as it relates to us as Christians Matthew 22:10, Matthew 13:47
- 2 Discuss the role of the church in the task of getting kingdom subjects ready for this end time reality
- 3 What message does this parable have for brethren who think the Church leaderships should take immediate drastic measures against those perceived as the black sheep in the church? Matt. 13; 47-49
(3) In the light of this parable, discuss the reward of true Christian living. Matt. 13; 48

CONCLUSION:

As Christians, our duty is to obey God’s injunction to us by preaching the word to the unsaved and sharing the word in the church. It is not our role or duty to condemn people but to allow the Holy Spirit to convict them, knowing fully well that on the judgement day, there will be sorting by the angels. They will differentiate true Christians from mere church goers. We should, therefore, all strive towards good Christian living.

MEMORY VERSE Matthew 13:49; “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just.”

EXAMINE YOURSELF

What will be your position on the judgement day?

STUDY 25

SUB-THEME: The Portrait of the Kingdom

TOPIC: The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Text: Matthew 25:1-13

AIM: To help Christians maintain a healthy, godly living, be wise and vigilant as we await the coming of Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins to call the disciples' attention to the fact that believers must do all within their ability, and even go the extra mile, to ensure their readiness to receive the Lord whenever He comes calling. The ten virgins were waiting to join the wedding procession and they hoped to take part in the wedding banquet. But by the time the Chief Celebrant, who had delayed in coming, arrived, five of them had run out of oil. By the time they went to purchase oil, the bridegroom took His seat and ordered the gate shut. Only five of the virgins were able to make it to the very end. When Jesus returns to take his people to heaven, we must be ready. Spiritual preparation cannot be bought or borrowed at the last minute; our relationship with God must be maintained until the very end.

STUDY GUIDE

- (1) Relate the parable of the ten virgins to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ Matthew 25: 1-13
- (2) While Jesus Christ tarries, how do we guide ourselves against slumber? Matthew 25:2-5, 1 Peter 5:8
- (3) Highlight the dangers of not being prepared at His appearing. Matthew 25:6-12
- (4) What is the reward of being ready? Matthew 25:10

CONCLUSION: As we patiently await the ultimate wedding at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should be wise like the five virgins who were fully prepared for the feast. Our spiritual life has to be sound, knowing full well that Jesus is coming to rapture a glorious church. Therefore, Christians should be awake to righteous living

MEMORY VERSE Matthew 25:13 “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How prepared are you for the second coming of Christ.

STUDY 26

SUB THEME: THE POTRIAT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM IN PARABLES – THE TENANTS

TEXT: MATT 25: 14-30

AIM: To remind us of the kingdom rewards to its citizens based on their individual performance with their talents.

INTRODUCTION:

The parable of the tenants portrays the kingdom as an investment to which the king has great profit return expectations from his stewards.

It was therefore a great privilege to the stewards to be part of this investment as it offers them the great opportunity to partake in the king's reward if their stewardship is commended. Here the reward system is based on commitment, faithfulness and performance.

This study will challenge us to wisely utilize the various opportunities available in God's vineyard today and make great returns to the Lord faithfully. This is what the kingdom will use to grade our reward on the last day because our talent is only useful when they bless others.

STUDY GUIDE

1. No one in church today is without a talent, why then do we have lots of idle members in our Churches today and how can the Church help them out. Mtt 25: 25, Lk 9.59-62, Titus 2: 11-15.
2. Discuss, with practical examples, causes of unfaithfulness in the use of these talents as found in our churches today and how one can avoid them.
I Cor 3:13, 2 Cor 5: 10, 2 Tim 3 : 1-6.
3. From the following passages, what steps must we, stewards of the kingdom, take to ensure appreciable returns to the king? Matt 25:21-23, Lk 12:42-48, Jn 9:4.
4. What lessons can we learn from the basis of the king's rewards to the stewards as compared to our contemporary society? Mtt 25:19-21, Lk 23:22-25, Gal 6:7-10

Conclusion

Idleness and unfaithfulness in God's service are dangerous and we should grow to see it as such. Whatever we do now, or fail to do, will have an eternal consequence on the day when our labour will be justly rewarded.

MEMORY VERSE: Mat 25:28 "Take therefore the talent from him and give it to him which had ten talents"

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Check yourself now, how many talents have you gained so far?

STUDY 27

SUB THEME: THE POTRIAT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM IN PARABLES - THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

TEXT: LK 18:1-8; Lk 11: 1 - 13

AIM: To highlight the need for us to persevere in prayers, in the face of many opposition that will seek to discourage us from praying, confident that God our Father will answer us.

INTRODUCTION: For believers, one of the key discouragements to prayers is the fear that we would not be heard. Our Lord Jesus sought, in almost all his teaching on prayer, to encourage us on this one fact, that the Father will hear and answers us if and whenever we pray. The enemy will always seek to undermine our faith in this. May we be encouraged, as we go through this study, to persevere in our prayers, having this confidence that God our Father will answer us.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Read Lk 18:1 - 3.
 - a. What pictures normally comes to mind when you think of i) a judge, ii) a widow
 - b. Can you identify how the following posed as obstacles to the widow in seeking help from the judge? (i) Her Widowhood/Poverty, (ii) The unjust nature of the judge, (iii) The fact that the judge feared neither God nor man
2. Compare/contrast our situation as believers coming to God with our requests to that of the widow going to the judge in the following areas
 - a. Access to present case. Heb 4:15,16
 - b. Relationship 1Jn 3:1,2; Jn 1:12
 - c. Having an advocate 1Jn 2:2
 - d. Willingness to answer us
3. What lessons do you think Jesus wanted us to learn from this parable? Lk 18: 1,8; Lk 11: 11 - 13

CONCLUSION

In this parable, our Lord Jesus uses the almost impossible situation of the widow going before an unjust judge to show us how favourable our case is before God and so the need for us to approach boldly and persevere in our requests. We see a judge who is unjust and does not fear God or man being approached by a widow. Of course, he was not going to be swayed by sentiments. The poor widow would not be able to afford a bribe or engage the services of an advocate who could plead on her behalf. Notwithstanding all these obstacles arrayed against her, she still pressed on and prevailed. In our own case as believers, we are going to our Father, who is full of mercy, a righteous Judge, and we have our Lord Jesus who pleads our case before the Father. So do not faint. Let the case of this widow encourage you to press on; our Father will surely answer you.

MEMORY VERSE

Lk 18:1 “Then He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.”

EXAMINE YOURSELF

What is that situation that has adversely affected your faith in the Lord?

STUDY 28

SUB THEME: THE POTRIAT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM IN PARABLES - THE DISHONEST MANAGER

TEXT: LK 16:1-13

AIM: To highlight the need for us as believers to use the riches we have in this world to help those who are in need.

INTRODUCTION: In this parable our Lord Jesus used the story of a steward, who wasted his master's resources and was about to be sacked, to paint a portrait of how bona fide kingdom subjects who have a stake in the kingdom of heaven should make use of the advantages (riches and gifts) we have in this world to build treasures for ourselves in heaven.

The steward was able to buy favour from men of the world by offering them favourable deals than they got before and was commended for his foresight in seeking for how to make his future better. We will from this study find out what our Lord Jesus expects us to emulate from this dishonest steward.

Study Questions:

1. Explain who a steward is? What was the steward in the passage accused of?
2. Can believers be described as stewards? whose stewards are we, and for what? 1 Cor 4: 1,2; 1Pet 4:10
3. Read Lk 16: 3 – 13
 - a. For what do you think the dishonest steward was commended? v8
 - b. What do you think Our Lord Jesus meant by the children of this world being wiser in their own generation than the children of light? v8
 - c. Read v 9 in NLT or other easy to read versions; what do you understand by our Lord's admonition to "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"
4. In the light of this parable, how should kingdom subjects conduct themselves and discharge their responsibilities as stewards in this world, especially in matters concerning money? Lk 16: 9 - 13

CONCLUSION

Many have wrongly applied the wisdom of this parable and have even used it to justify and encourage fraudulent behaviours by and among kingdom citizens. But far from that, our Lord Jesus was simply saying that the steward whose only hope was limited to what he could get in this world had the foresight to think of how to make sure his future was secure. As kingdom citizens, we are here encouraged to make profitable use of our earthly resources for kingdom purposes. The way we handle worldly riches goes a long way in showing who our master is, God or mammon. When we handle worldly wealth as God has commanded us, we are simply on course for a glorious eternity with the King.

MEMORY VERSE

Lk 16:13a No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate one and love the other.

EXAMINE YOURSELF

Where have you laid your treasure?

STUDY 29

SUB THEME: THE POTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: THE KINGDOM IN PARABLES - THE GOOD SAMARITAN

TEXT: LK 10:25-37

AIM: To help us understand that necessity is laid on us, as bona fide citizens of the kingdom, to exhibit true compassion whenever, wherever there is need to do so.

INTRODUCTION: The Parable of the Good Samaritan is predicated by and in answer to a question posed to Jesus by a lawyer. In this parable, Jesus so forcefully attacked a pervading erroneous religious mindset of his people, a mindset that seemed to thrive on sheer hypocritical display of dead religiosity. The teacher of religion came to Jesus asking questions about the key to eternal life, not because he sincerely desired that glorious experience, but essentially because he wanted to impress the Lord and the crowd with his 'sizzling spirituality.' Even when the Master had so clearly expounded the deep spiritual truth to him on what practical religion is all about, the unrepentant hypocrite still pressed for attention.

In response to the man's question, 'and who is my neighbour?', Jesus told the story of a man on a journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, who was attacked, stripped and beaten by robbers. A priest and a Levite passed by without helping him. But a Samaritan stops and cares for him, takes him to an inn, and pays for his care. Given the fact that the Samaritans despised enemies of the Jews and treated as outcasts, listeners would have expected a Jew to be the hero of Jesus' story. But they were disappointed.

This parable holds up an ethical level for us to strive for, see Matt. 5; 48; attacks racial prejudices, and teaches that genuine love is something you feel and do, and defines what kingdom citizens' relationship with their neighbours should be.

STUDY GUIDE

1. (a) What, in your opinion, motivated the Lawyer's questions to Jesus? Lk. 10:25, 29.
(b) Compare his motive with that of the Jailer in Acts 16:25-30.
2. How would you describe the actions of the robbers, the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan in this parable? Compare these with what happens in Christendom today. Lk 10:30- 33.
3. What should be the kingdom citizen's response to those in distress? Lk. 10; 33, Jas 1:27a, I Thess 4:9, 10, 1 Jn. 3; 16-18.
4. What benefit awaits those who behave like the Samaritan in this story? Matt. 25; 31- 40, Eccl. 11; 1, Heb. 6; 10, Gal. 6; 9, Prov. 19; 17, 28; 27

CONCLUSION: The King Himself used this parable to teach kingdom citizens that true religion is not in the abundance of words, rituals or titles, but in the practical demonstration of love. Kingdom citizens are commanded to love the King and be devoted to one another in brotherly love; to share with God's people who are in need, and the practice hospitality. Love qua love is the hallmark of Kingdom life.

MEMORY VERSE: Jas 1: 27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction....."

EXAMINE YOURSELF; How do you often respond to those in distress?

STUDY 30

SUB THEME: THE POTRIAT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: The Kingdom In Parables - The Repentant Son (Prodigal) And Grumbling (Elder Brother).

TEXT: LK 15:11-32

AIM: To help us understand the love and willingness of the kingdom to receive whosoever will genuinely return to it irrespective of past records.

INTRODUCTION: The story of the prodigal son teaches us that God's love and grace for kingdom citizens is inelastic and unconditional. The young man, who obviously lacked nothing in his father's house, was forced to bow to the glitz and glamour which the world dangled for him as carrot. His father freely acceded to his foolish demand for freedom and released to him that which was his due. It didn't take long before he squandered his resources and began to live like a vagabond. And it soon dawned on him that life outside the father's presence and authority is an express invitation to failure, frustration and self destruction.

When the jungle finally matured, the young man was forced to swallow his foolish pride and retraced his steps back to his father's house. And to his uttermost surprise, the father was there waiting with outstretched arms to receive him back into his warm embrace, and to celebrate his return, a decision which did go down well with elder brother.

In this study, we will try to see how this story relates with our individual and collective attitudes to God, and how He patiently waits for us to come back to our senses and take the appropriate steps back to His loving embrace.

STUDY GUIDE

1 (a) In your own opinion, what could have prompted the younger son to demand for his own share of his father's wealth? Lk 15:11-13.

(b) Assuming that you were his father, would you have acceded to that demand?

2 "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee..." Luke 15; 18. (a) Why did he take this decision? Luke 15; 14- 17 (b) What lesson does this have for backsliding citizens of the kingdom? See also Isa. 1; 18-20,

3 How would you describe the reaction of the older son to his father's magnanimity toward his repentant prodigal brother? (b) Would you have reacted differently? Why?

CONCLUSION

It is very important to remind us that God's arms are ever open to receive sinners back into His loving embrace, if only they could humbly retrace their steps back to Him. Love compels Him to accept to receive us back even when we clearly do not deserve a second chance. But this cannot be possible until the sinner has done the needful- realize where you have fallen, arise and return to Him. He shall in no wise cast you away.

MEMORY VERSE: LK 15:24 "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

EXAMINE YOURSELF: What is the nature of your relationship with the King?

STUDY 31

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: The Wicked Tenants

AIM: *To warn us of the dangers of mistreating God's servants and to show what happens when we are not loyal and obedient to God.*

TEXT: **Luke 20: 9 – 18**

INTRODUCTION: The insistent yearning of the heart of God over the nation of Israel is recounted once again in the parable of the Wicked Tenants. God is the '**certain man**' who leased the vineyard to the vine dressers (the leaders of the nation Isaiah 5: 1 – 7). He blessed the nation abundantly and gave the Jews a land that was rich and pleasant. All He asked for was that they obey His statutes and give Him the "Spiritual Harvest" He deserved.

Rather than showcase their gratitude to God for their blessings, and joyfully give the Lord His due, the nation proceeded to rob God and reject His messengers. God was patient and sent them one servant after another, but they refused to obey. Finally, He sent His beloved Son and they killed Him. As we progress in our study, we shall trust God to help us see how our text applies to us as subjects of the kingdom.

STUDY GUIDE

1. "Now at vintage time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruits of the vineyard" (vs. 10). Identify and explain some "Spiritual harvests" God deserves from the vineyard of our lives Heb. 13: 15, Phil. 1: 11, Luke 1: 74 – 75, Matt. 3: 8.
2. Read Luke 20: 10 – 11. Are ministers mistreated in our churches today? If yes, discuss some of the ways they are being mistreated.
3. What are the dangers of consistent rebellion against God's instructions even when God has given many opportunities for repentance?
4. Compare the actions of the wicked tenants in our text with what is happening in our churches today.

CONCLUSION:

As tenants in God's vineyard, there are privileges, blessings and superior knowledge that can advance the course of our lives if our loyalty to His authority is undivided and our obedience absolute and complete.

MEMORY VERSE: *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. 1 Cor 3:9 (NKJV)*

EXAMINE YOURSELF: *Is your loyalty and obedience to God's authority absolute?*

STUDY 32

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: **The Rich Fool**

TEXT; Luke 12; 13-21

AIM: *To call brethren's attention to the dangers of yielding to the spirit of covetousness that is so rapidly ravaging the very fabrics of our spirituality.*

INTRODUCTION: The Parable of the Rich Fool pictures the rapidly growing penchant for materialism among kingdom citizens. The pervading love and craze for wealth and earthly possessions in our generation has unwittingly led so many people in both secular and religious circles into the domain of greed and covetousness. To many church folks, especially those that jump from one church or ministry to the other, the very driving force that keeps them on their toes is certainly not their love for God but an irrepensible desire to acquaint themselves with the right spiritual key to amass wealth. Therefore, once the door is opened and the wealth starts rolling in, God and everything about Him is immediately deleted from the picture, while the self assumes the centre stage of their lives. Many have literally sold their conscience and are ever ready to do anything just so long as they are able to accumulate wealth for themselves. The parable of the rich fool still remains a serious warning to everyone that has been trapped by the spirit of covetousness.

STUDY GUIDE

1. "And He said unto them, 'take heed, and beware of covetousness', for a man's life consisted not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Discuss this statement in the light of the pervading materialistic tendencies among kingdom citizens in this generation.
2. Why did God call the rich man a fool? vs.17- 20
3. " So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Vs. 20. What does it mean to be rich towards God?
4. In the light of the following scriptures, how can we guide our hearts against greed and covetousness?
1Tim 6:6-10, Ps: 49-17

CONCLUSION:

Wealth gained by dishonesty will be diminished. Covetousness robs us of our legitimate place in the kingdom. Let us be always contented with whatever measure of grace God has given to us.

Memory verse:

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's. (Ex 20:17)NKJV

EXAMINE YOURSELF:

Are you better than the rich fool?

STUDY 33

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: The Barren Fig Tree.

AIM: To confront our hearts with the dangers of being barren in our work and walk in God's kingdom

TEXT: Luke 13: 6 – 9, 2Pet 1: 1-9

INTRODUCTION: Barrenness does not only apply to infertility in child bearing as we commonly know, but it cuts across all facets of life. To be barren means to be unfruitful; not producing fruits or seeds; not producing anything useful or successful. Jesus used this parable to warn kingdom citizens of the danger of not bearing fruits for the King. We shall learn more as we press on in our study.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Why would the owner of the vineyard seek to harvest fruits from the fig tree? Luke 13: 6 – 7
2. "... Look, for three years I have come seeking fruits on this fig tree and find none". In your own opinion, why do you think the fig tree was barren? (ii) Explain the reasons why a lot of people are in the church for long, yet they are barren in their work and walk in God's kingdom. 2 Peter 1: 5 – 9, Matt. 13: 18 – 22, 1 Cor. 3: 2
3. Discuss some of the areas where many are barren in the kingdom today. Gal. 5: 22 – 23, Prov. 11: 30, Col. 1: 10.
4. What are the dangers of being barren in our walk and work in God's kingdom? Matt. 21: 18 – 19, Isaiah 5: 2 – 5, Luke 13: 7.

CONCLUSION: According to bible history, fig trees produce fruits double or even triple yearly, but one sad thing about the fig tree in our text is that it never produced any fruit for three years. A lot of people have been in church for a long time without bearing any tangible fruits. They sit in church yearly without meeting any need in the heart of God. God's heart bleeds when we are not fruitful and productive in kingdom service, soul winning and in the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Let us arise and reject every form of barrenness.

MEMORY VERSE: And even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matt. 3: 10) NKJV

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you a barren or a fruitful Christian? Are you truly bearing the maximum fruits God is expecting from you?

STUDY 34

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: The Kingdom In Parables: The Wedding Feast And Great Banquet.

TEXT: LUKE 14:16-24; Mat 22: 1-14

AIM: To highlight the dangers in delaying to accept and walk in the light of the gospel of the kingdom.

INTRODUCTION: A banquet is a formal meal for a large number of people. Usually it is a special occasion at which speeches are often made. For people who attend this type of occasion, certain preparations are made which determine their readiness for such occasion. The invitation to the feast was free, yet people (invited guests) were full of excuses. In this parables, our Lord Jesus likens the gospel to an invitation to a wedding feast or a great banquet. Just as we see in the parable, many people are still full of excuses as to why they cannot respond to the Lord's invitation so graciously extended to all and sundry.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1a. Who do you think is the Host in this great Banquet? Luke 14:15, Isaiah 55:1-2.
- b. What do you think was meant by the statement 'all things are ready?' Matt. 22; 4
2. Read Lk 14: 16 – 20; Mat 22: 2 – 6; What excuses did the guests give for their failure to respond positively to the King's invitation? (b)What does Mat 22:5a point to as their reason for not coming
4. Are we in anyway making light of God's invitation today? What are the common excuses we give today
5. One of the guests was identified by the king as not wearing a wedding garment. What danger do you think this portends to us as believers concerning the kingdom of God? 1 Cor 9:27

CONCLUSION: This parable pictures God issuing an invitation by means of the gospel to all mankind, declaring that 'all things are ready'. It also highlights the free nature of the gospel. It is free and all are invited to partake of the rich and sumptuous banquet prepared by the King Himself. However, there is also the danger that because of its free nature, men are wont to make light of it and not count it important. We must, as believers, fight to ensure we do not make light of the gospel which we have received, or attend to its demands with complacency, lest we be cast out and lose our citizenship like that guest without the wedding garment.

MEMORY VERSE: Mat 22:5a "But they made light of it and went their ways".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you making light of the gospel of the kingdom?

STUDY 35

THEME: THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM CITIZENS

TOPIC: Kingdom Citizens Are Disciples Who Have Fully Counted The Cost

TEXT: LUKE 9:57-62

AIM: To encourage Christians to come the place of complete surrender to the will of God in all areas of their lives.

INTRODUCTION: Kingdom citizens are those who are born again; genuine members of God's family. They are a peculiar breed of persons, fully transformed and committed to pleasing the king in all ramifications of life. They are fully aware that the kingdom life is not a bread and butter affair, but a serious call to the king's business, in season and out of season, whether convenient or not. For all bona fide Kingdom citizens, following the king and doing His business is a top priority, and must be placed far above all personal affairs. In other words, kingdom life is a whole lot of sacrificial enterprise, and must be so conceived and approached if any meaningful impact must take place. We shall critically analyze these in the course of this study.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Read Matt. 9;55, 56 and critically analyze Jesus' response to that man who signified his desire to follow Him.
2. How does this statement apply to the horde of persons currently in, or claiming the call of God to ministry?
3. To the man that asked to be allowed to bury his father before responding to the His invitation, Jesus said, 'let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God' Matt. 9; 59, 60. What special message does this convey to the kingdom citizens?
(b) Is it a call to abdicate one's social responsibilities?
- 4 "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" Matt. 9; 62. Discuss this statement in the light of this study topic.

CONCLUSION: Kingdom citizens who truly want to please God must be willing to count the cost of going the extra mile for Jesus Christ. They must surrender their will, plans and programmes and pick up the will, plans and programmes of God. They must be willing to obey God if they truly want to serve him. This can only be possible when they have an intimate relationship with God, and acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in all aspects of their lives.

MEMORY VERSE: LUKE 9:62

"And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hands to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God".

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you ready to follow Jesus Christ no matter what it will cost you?

STUDY 36

THEME: THE KING AND HIS KINGDOM

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM CITIZENS

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS DO NOT SHOW OFF

TEXT: MATT. 5:3, PHIL. 2:1-11

AIM: This Study is to bring out the quality of humility found in Kingdom citizens

INTRODUCTION: In the world today, many people are literally entangled in a ‘cat and dog’ fight either to assert their rights or to showcase their possessions and skills. Many Church folks even engage in the unimaginable just to advertise and publicize their gifts and profiles. But kingdom citizens follow the example of Christ in humility. Christ humbled Himself so much so that He was obedient to the Father’s will even unto the death on the cross. He knew He was entitled to all the rights, privileges and authority appertaining to the Godhead. But He willfully chose to lay them aside so He could focus effectively on that which He considered most expedient- man’s eternal redemption.

We shall, in this study, take a closer look at the Master’s example, to see how brethren can effectively appropriate this spiritual treasure for more profitable exploits in the kingdom.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What does it mean to be humble? Matt. 5:3, Phil. 2:3,4.
2. How did Christ exhibit this attitude? Phil. 2:5-8.
3. What happens to the humble? 1 Peter 5:6, James 4:6, Phil. 2:9-11.
4. Why is it difficult for some people (even some kingdom citizens) to be humble?

CONCLUSION: Humility is considering others better than ourselves and looking not only to our own interests, but also to interests of others. Christ heartily exhibited this attitude, and it ultimately led to His exaltation. Many find it difficult to be humble mostly because they focus on self and follow the crowd.

MEMORY VERSE: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (PHIL. 2:5)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: Are you a humble person?

STUDY 37

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS DIE TO LIVE

TEXT: Matt 16:24-27; Jn 12:20-26

AIM: To teach us that kingdom citizen can earn eternal life with God only through real and unselfish commitment to Christ.

INTRODUCTION: If we as kingdom citizens must make heaven, we must be totally committed to our Lord Jesus by pledging our whole existence to his service. This pledge may mean hardship, discomfort, risk of losing our lives or jobs or any other thing that provides us security in this world; but the truth remains that if we shy away from this world's temporary pains we stand the chance of losing the coveted crown of eternal life with Christ. Kingdom citizens must therefore brace – up and carry their crosses without looking back in their service to Christ. Like the kernel of wheat we must die to self, consistently exhibit a deep sense of humility, and shun all manner of vices and allurements to worldly honours.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What do you understand by the term 'die to live' within the context of our study. Gal.2; 20
2. From the following passages, identify and explain the nature and essence of this dying to live. Col. 3:1-10; Gal 5:19-21
3. In the light of the following passages, what can help us earn eternal life? Gal 3:26; Gal 5:18,22-23; Col 4:2-3; Acts 13:3; Deut 8:3
4. How can we show true commitment to serving Christ in our churches? Discuss.

CONCLUSION:

We have seen that unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it will not germinate nor produce any fruit. Our Lord Jesus died and resurrected, and thus became our first fruit, having in Him the seed of eternal life. He gives this life to as many as are in Him and serve Him whole heartedly, without any form of reservation. Your present condition notwithstanding, keep the faith, for your soul is worth more than all the riches in this world.

MEMORY VERSE: Jn 12:24 "...Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds" (NIV).

EXAMINE YOURSELF: In which ways have you truly committed your service to Christ within and outside your church?

STUDY 38

TOPIC: Kingdom citizen love like their king

AIM: To show us that a kingdom citizen, created in the image of the king, must care for others the same way the king demonstrated his love and care to the world by dying for it.

TEXT: Matt 5:42-48; Jn 13:31-35

INTRODUCTION: Love is caring. It is the ability to show concern for some one. The king first cared for us and died for us even while we were still sinners. This implies that we must also care and love like our king. This includes loving our enemies and not desiring or praying for their death. If we must be like our King, we must also care and pray for our enemies. Let us discover the truth from the scriptures.

STUDY GUIDE

STUDY GUIDE

1. Explain, with illustration, what you understand by the term “love”?
Read 1 Cor 13: 1-8.
 2. The injunction is to love our enemies. How can we show love to them?. Rom 12:9-21, Rom 13:8-10 ; Matt 5:44; Lk 6: 27-35
 3. What lesson can we learn from the following passages concerning our King’s love and us. Rom 5:6-8; Jn 5:42, Jn 8:42 ; Jn 13:1-17.
 4. How can you assess the level of love existing among members in your church?
 5. What is the benefit of loving your enemies? Rom 12:20
- 6. CONCLUSION:**
7. “Like father, like son” goes a common and popular saying of our time. This truly reflects our study today ; for if indeed we are kingdom citizens, we must behave and love like our king, who loved us first, even to the point of dying for our sins, and not for us to take laws into our hands by condemning others. By this new command, which is a complete deviation from the old, we will truly show that Jesus is our Saviour, Lord and king. We are therefore to strive to be perfect as our king is perfect.

MEMORY VERSE: Matt 5:44- But I tell you: Love your enemies and Pray for those who persecute you.

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How have you been caring for those who don’t like you?

STUDY 39

TOPIC: Kingdom citizens are disciplined

AIM: To teach us that; for kingdom citizens to receive the crown, they must train and be self – disciplined in the study of the word, in prayers, worship and in their relationship with others.

TEXT: 1Cor. 9:24-27; 2Tim 2:5

INTRODUCTION: Everyone who participates in any competition does so for a medal or an honour. But the truth remains that for the person to receive the honour or medal, he/she must abide strictly by the rules of the competition. This truth also applies to our Spiritual race. For us to make heaven and receive the crown from our King, we must diligently train and cultivate self-discipline, and be careful to observe all the rules.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. What is “To be disciplined” within the context of our text and study? 1Cor 9:25a
2. How can we show seriousness in our training and discipline in order to receive the crown? Josh 1:8; Lk 22:40; Heb 11:6; Heb 10:25; 1Thes 5:17
3. Spiritual progress requires self – discipline. How can we relate with our worldly friends in relation to our study and the Scripture in 2Cor 6:14 – 16
4. How can you rate the state of discipline/training in your church/home in all its ramifications?

CONCLUSION: The crown of life will be given to only those kingdom citizens who diligently seek the king and work conscientiously for it. This requires training, hard work and serious preparation just like an athlete going for the Olympic competition. It therefore, boils down to the fact that for us to be honoured by our king, we must train and work hard in our study of the word, in prayers, in our relationship with others and shun everything evil. It won't be easy but the rules can't be amended either.

MEMORY VERSE: 2Tim 2:5 “...If anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he completes according to the rules”

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How is your training like in the study of the word, in prayer, worship and in your relationship with other people.

STUDY 40

PORTRAIT OF KINGDOM CITIZENS

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS HAVE INTEGRITY

TEXT: IITim. 2:15-26; ICor. 3:10-15

AIM: To inculcate into the life of the brethren the attribute of integrity.

INTRODUCTION: The advanced learner's dictionary of current English, defines integrity as the quality of being honest and having strong moral principle. It is the quality a person possesses that can make him or her to be trusted. Honest people are scarce in our generation. Our King is trustworthy, honest, pure and upright. These are the sure marks of integrity, and these traits must be evident in the lives of those who claim to be kingdom citizens.

STUDY GUIDE

1What is Integrity? Jn. 1:47, Job 1:9

2How would you identify a Christian who exhibits integrity in the church, business, school, or community? Job 1:8, Prov. 11:1, IICor. 4:2, Acts 8:18-23

3Why should kingdom citizens show integrity in their day-to-day living? Prov. 20:7, Matt. 5:16

4How would you rate the integrity of believers today on a scale of 1 to 10. Why do you rate it so?

5How can one maintain integrity in this evil generation? Dan. 1:8, Job 27:5-6, Josh. 1:8-9

CONCLUSION: A man of integrity is a man of his words; without deceit; honest; upright and sincere. Such men are needed in our time. If a man has integrity, God, Satan, his family and himself will attest to it. If we have integrity, God will bless us and our seeds after us, and we will bring glory to the Lord our King. We can maintain our integrity by taking a stand on moral issues and walk daily in the light of the word of God.

MEMORY VERSE: "As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel – a man of complete integrity." (John 1:47; NLT)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: So what? Do you have integrity?

STUDY 41

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

TEXT: Acts 6:1-7

AIM: To remind kingdom citizens of the need to care for and bear one another's burdens.

INTRODUCTION: The early church left for us an example to follow. They all cared for each other. Their concern went beyond mere words to actions. No one lacked among them, and no one owned "all" among them. They met each other's needs and were always sharing. The church grew in all ramifications, and God was honoured.

STUDY GUIDE

1. How did the early church demonstrate care for one another? Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; 6:1-3
2. What was the effect of their care on the church and the community? Acts 2:47; 4:3; 6:7
3. "Bear one another's burden and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal.6:22). Compare this statement with the type of care shown in your church.
4. Identify from your church setting, the factors that hinder the practising of Christian caring.

CONCLUSION: Everyone needs some level of care irrespective of their social standing. Care for one another is a show of love, and a mark of the Christian faith. Brotherly love and care will remove murmuring in the church, increase the number of membership, affect the community where the church is located and eliminate lack, thus creating avenue for worship that flows from the heart.

MEMORY VERSE

"All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had." (Acts 4:32; NLT)

EXAMINE YOURSELF; Can you honestly say you are caring?

STUDY 42

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS BEAR WITNESS FOR THEIR KING

TEXT: Acts 8:26-40

AIM: To awaken kingdom citizens to see the need to witness for their master.

INTRODUCTION:

Like all bona fide Christians of his time, Philip the Evangelist's Kingdom life was anchored on, and driven by a very strong missionary and evangelistic mindset, a powerful innate desire to harvest souls, and more souls, for the Kingdom. He traversed the length and breadth, nooks and crannies of Palestine preaching the good news of the Kingdom and making disciples of all who came his way, in response to the dictates of the 'Great Commission.'

Jesus' mandate to all who love Him and yield themselves to His Lordship is simple; "Go and make disciples of all nations....." Matthew 28:19f. It is therefore incumbent on all sons and daughters of the Kingdom to commit their very lives and entire resources to this task of literally dragging lost souls out of the dungeon of darkness and unto the Kingdom of light.

In this study, we will seek to recall the attention of God's people to this fact, that the Lord's primary concern and mandate for all genuine subjects of the Kingdom is to yield ourselves as instruments for the Kingdom building and expansion.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What is the command from our King concerning witnessing? Mark 16:15 – 17, Matthew 28:19,20, Acts 1:8
2. What should be the main thrust of our message for the king? Matthew 10; 1,7&8, Luke 10;5, 9
3. What should be our response to this command? Mark 16:20, Acts 8:4
4. What are the benefits of responding positively to this command? Daniel 12:3, Mark 16:15-18, Luke 10:17, Acts 2:37-41.
5. What is the danger of not witnessing to our King? Ezekiel 3:17 – 18

CONCLUSION

If our families, communities and entire society must be turned around from the path of destruction the world is currently headed to, then we must take to heart the fact that we were all called by the Lord and commissioned to curtail the excesses of the powers of darkness through strategic and concerted evangelism/missionary programmes. The easiest and most effective way to deal with darkness is to introduce light into the situation. And we are messengers of the gospel of light.

MEMORY VERSE; Matthew 10;7 "As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.'

EXAMINE YOURSELF; How often do you respond to the prodding of the Holy Spirit to witness for the King in your family, business, neighborhood etc?

STUDY 43

SUB THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM CITIZENS

TOPIC: Kingdom Citizens Challenge unhelpful Traditions

Text– Mk.2:18-27, Luke 5:12-35

AIM: To help us understand and know how to deal with certain traditions we hold so tenaciously to be it customary and religious but are meaningless and unhelpful to our Christian living.

INTRODUCTION:

Tradition is simply defined as age-long beliefs, statements, legends, customs, etc handed down from generation to generation, especially by the word of mouth and or by practice. The importance of tradition cannot be over-emphasized as our Christian faith has been handed on as a tradition down the generations. Therefore the Bible is a record of traditions we received from the church of the past. However, we must agree that there are certain traditions that have become obsolete and unhelpful. Rather than aid our Christian growth, such traditions constitute a serious hindrances. In this study, we shall be focusing on these unhelpful traditions (doctrinal & customary), to identify them and, as citizens of the kingdom, see what our attitudes towards them should be

STUDY GUIDE.

1. What can we say about traditions generally? Discuss the following passages and classify as helpful /unhelpful; Mk 2:18-27, John 9: 6-16, 1Cor 11:23-26 , 15:1-7, Mat. 5:21-48, Mk 7:1-9, Luke 5:12-35.
2. What are some of the unhelpful traditional practices common amongst us as Christians today both in our society and the church? Matt 15:2-12,
3. Discuss the negative effects of these unhelpful traditions to the body of Christ. Matt 15:4-9,
4. What should be our attitude towards these unhelpful traditions? How can they be challenged? Col 2:8, 3:17, 2Thes. 2:12-15, 3:6, 1Pet 1:18-19. Act 4:6-13. (Compare with Mk11:15, Exo 32:19-20).
5. (a) Is it possible to have these unhelpful traditions modified or discarded? Mat. 5:17-22, 27-48

CONCLUSION:

As kingdom citizens, we must be prepared to shun traditions (customary, doctrinal/religious) that add no value to our kingdom life, but this must be done with wisdom in order not to compound issues. Certain unhelpful traditions might be 'less evil' to keep than the outcome of a negative approach. However, it would be a mistake to think that causing offence is always the wrong thing to do. There are often occasions when upsetting people becomes a price worth paying for a church to move forward and souls made worthy of the kingdom.

MEMORY VERSE: *Col 2:8– Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.*

EXAMINE YOURSELF: *As a kingdom citizen, what unhelpful traditions are you still tenaciously holding on to? Be bold, get rid of them today.*

STUDY 45

SUB THEME: Portrait of the Kingdom Citizens

TOPIC: Kingdom Citizens Forgive like their King – Matt.6:12-15; 18:21-35

AIM: To help us understand and emulate Christ's kind of forgiveness as Christians.

INTRODUCTION: It is not uncommon for Christians to have questions about forgiveness such as; is forgiveness a possible, a choice or physical act involving will, or is it a feeling, etc. As Kingdom citizens, living in the world amidst people who daily wrong and molest us, how we handle this key issue of life is very important. How often should we forgive our offenders before taking revenge? Forgiveness does not come easy for majority of Christians. It is natural for our instinct to recoil in self-defence when we're injured. We naturally do not overflow with mercy, grace and forgiveness when we're wronged.

In this study, we shall be looking at the biblical insight on the issue of forgiveness, with particular interest on Christ's examples.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Christ teaches us to forgive just as the Lord forgave us: Discuss. Matt.6:12-15; 18:21-35, Matt 5:23-24.
2. How do we forgive even when it's against our will? Matt 5:23-24 Col 3:13, Matt 18:21-22, Lk 17:3-4, 1Jn 1:9, Eph 4:32
3. Are there conditions for forgiveness, and at what point can an offender not be forgiven? Matt.6:12-15; Luke 23:24; Act 7:50, 2Cor 2:5-8, James 2:13, Matt 12:31, Mk 3:29 (offence against the Holy Ghost)
4. Why must we forgive? Matt 6:14-16, 44-45, Mk 11:25, Ps 130:4, Rom 5:8, 1Jn2:6-10, 3:9-10.
5. Identify the benefits that go with forgiveness from the following passages; Matt 6:12-15, Mk 2:5, Mk 11:25-26, Rom 4:7, 1Jn 2:17. As kingdom citizens, what should our attitude be? Lk 23:34, Acts 7:60.

CONCLUSION: We forgive those who offend or despitefully use us as a mark of obedience to the Lord because it is His command. Christ is our example in this all important matter. Forgiveness is a choice and decision we make. Since forgiveness goes against our natural disposition, we must forgive by faith, whether we feel like it or not. We must trust God to do the work in us that needs to be done so that the forgiveness will be complete.

God honours our commitment to obey Him and our desire to please him when we choose to forgive offenders. If He forgave us first while we were yet sinners, as His followers, we must emulate him and forgive others, knowing that the measure by which we forgive our transgressors is the same measure by which we are forgiven.

MEMORY VERSE *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven. (Mt. 18:21-22)*

EXAMINE YOURSELF: *How many people are you still holding in unforgiveness?.*

STUDY 45

SUB THEME: Portrait of the Kingdom Citizens

TOPIC: Kingdom Citizens are Righteous like their King –

TEXT: Matt.5:16-20; 27-37, Matt 23:13-36, Rom 1:17

AIM: To enlighten us about the righteousness of Christ and how we can live righteously as his followers.

INTRODUCTION: To be righteous is simply to be in right standing with the Lord. It can also be described as living right; exhibiting ‘right’ conduct. It is the outward manifestation of the life of Christ in us; manifesting godly character; doing good works.

Jesus Christ Himself is our righteousness. As bona fide citizens of the kingdom, we have the righteousness of Christ imputed into us. And so, by virtue of ‘being in Christ’, we are automatically declared righteous. However, in John 8; 12, Jesus said that whoever has the light of life in him will never walk in the darkness. As such, whoever is in Christ does not just have righteousness in followership, good followers have the likelihood of behaving like their master in a number of ways such imputed in him, but manifests that righteousness through good works. That is to say that, as kingdom citizens, the world should be able to distinguish us from the crowd by the good works we do. For, as Paul succinctly noted in Ephesians 2; 10, “We are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works...”. In this study, we shall remind ourselves that, as kingdom citizens, Christ is our standard in righteousness, and so we are expected to be like Him in thought and word and deed. Righteousness is indeed the hallmark of kingdom citizenship.

STUDY GUIDE

1. From the following passages; Matt 5:16-20, Gen 15:16, Deut 6:25, 2Sam 22:21, Prov 8:8, Gal 3:6, what do you understand by Kingdom citizens being righteous like their King?
2. Discuss the Christ’s kind of righteousness from our main texts and Heb 6:10.
3. In Matt 5:20, Christ spoke about the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees; Explain this statement, using the following scriptures; Matt 9:11, 14, Matt 15:1-9, Matt 19:3, Matt 23:13-36, Mk 10:2
4. Are there certain characters in the church today that can be described as those of the scribes and Pharisees (ref: Matt 23:13-36).
5. Why and how can we be righteous? Matt 23:23, Jn3:3, 1Pet1:23, Rom 3:22, 1Jn2:29, Ps 1:1-3
6. Are there benefits to righteous living? Mal4:2, Matt 5:6,8,33, Acts 10:35, Ps 1:1-3

CONCLUSION:

Kingdom citizens ought to be righteous like their king. Jesus Christ is our king and our lifestyle must radiate the Christ nature in us. As the light of the world, the world is depending on us to give them direction and illuminate the pervading darkness in the world. As the King Himself aptly noted; “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5; 20

MEMORY VERSE: If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him (1John 2:29)

EXAMINE YOURSELF: How bright is your light amidst the world’s darkness?

STUDY 46

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM CITIZEN

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS BELONG TO THE KING'S FAMILY - CHURCH

TEXT: (I COR. 12:1-20; HEB. 10:25)

AIM: To demonstrate that, just as we have our particular biological families, likewise we share common relationship as citizens of the kingdom which should not be made to suffer.

INTRODUCTION

The Church, from the Greek 'eklesia', can be simply defined as the body of Christ. It is a community of persons called out from the dominion of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The Church is the family of God, populated by sons and daughters of God, with Jesus Christ as first born.

Like the natural human family, the church is a living organism; a union of peculiar people who are bound together by their faith in, and absolute loyalty to the Holy Trinity. Every member of this family has certain rights and privileges accruing to them as bona fide sons and daughters. But they are also, individually and collectively, responsible for the overall wellbeing/welfare of the family.

STUDY GUIDES

1. From the following passages, (Luke 16:15-18; Matt. 28:18-19; 16:18-19; 1Cor. 12:12-20; Eph. 4:6; 2:14), explain how the church is viewed by:
 - (a) Jesus Christ
 - (b) Paul
2. As with a natural family, what are the criteria that will qualify one to be a member of the king's family (John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5; 3:16; Acts 2:37-38)
3. Explain the 'unity in diversity' as a healthy portrait of the kingdom citizenship and compare it to the present spate of denominationalism (Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:11-13; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; 3:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:13).
4. What are the benefits of belonging to the king's family (John 3:16; Eph. 4:15-16; Heb. 10:24-25).
5. How will you describe a life lived outside the King's family (Rev. 20:15; Ezra 2:62-63).

CONCLUSION: Believers are sons and daughters of God. They are a people set apart for God and His kingdom. They are members of the family of God; a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, a people ordained and equipped to show forth the praises of Him that called us all out of the darkness of this world into His marvellous light. As members of this family, we are to ensure that the health and overall welfare/ wellbeing of this family is not ever compromised.

Memory verse 2Cor. 6:18; "And I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

EXAMINE YOURSELF; what are your contributions toward the overall wellbeing of this family

STUDY 48

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM CITIZEN

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS GIVE- TO THE WORK OF THE KING

TEXT: MATT. 6:1-4, I CHRON. 9:1-14

AIM: To Help Christians See giving as an essential part of our spiritual service and to encourage brethren to give

INTRODUCTION: Many people in the church are ignorant of the fact that giving is an integral part of our Christian responsibility and service. As such, many Christians still find it very difficult to give, and are so easily irritated whenever there is a call to give. To some others the 'undue' emphasis on giving is a distraction. When they give, they do it grudgingly, unwillingly and absent-mindedly, thinking they are doing God or the pastor favour.

In this study, we shall consider the place of giving as an essential part of our service to the King.

STUDY GUIDE

1. From the text, I Chron. 29:2-14, discuss how David demonstrated giving with the people of Israel. (2 Cor. 8:1-5)
2. In which ways can we give to the work of the King (Exo. 25:1-2, 35:29-30; Ezra 3:6-7; I Chron. 29:2-8; Acts 4:33-37)
3. Giving is an investment that is expected to yield dividend. Discuss (Luke 6:38; I Sam 25:39-40; I Kings 3:4-14)
4. True Christian giving is not by compulsion, but an expression of love. Discuss. See John 3; 16,

CONCLUSION:

Giving is an expression of our love for God and people around us. As citizens of the kingdom we give to sustain and run the kingdom project. Giving is part of our service; it attracts great reward. (Luke 6; 38) God, our King, is provoked to act in our lives and situations when He is touched by our giving. It is only in giving that we receive. We must give sacrificially. .

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Cor. 9; 7 "Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

EXAMINE YOURSELF; Are you a giver?

STUDY 48

SUB-THEME: PORTRAIT OF THE KINGDOM CITIZEN

TOPIC: KINGDOM CITIZENS CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

TEXT: JUDE 1-25

AIM: To help us realize that as kingdom citizens, we must fight to defend our faith.

INTRODUCTION:

To contend is to fight for, to strive, to compete, to battle, or to stand up for a cause. Contrary to the ‘bread and butter’ gospel we all clamour for, the King did not leave us in doubt that kingdom citizenship is a declaration of war against the kingdom of darkness. This is so because Satan and his evil cohorts use every available weapon in their arsenal to strive to weaken, frustrate, and or destabilize the Church at personal, family and corporate levels. Unfortunately, due to the subtle nature of these attacks, many kingdom citizens are so easily ensnared.

Jude noted that the rank and file of the kingdom assembly has been very seriously infiltrated by wolves in sheep skin. “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained for this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jude 4. This is the crux of the matter. False teachers, false prophets, all shades and colours of charlatans, are all over the place wrecking deadly blows on the church through doctrinal blunders, heretical teachings and all forms of manipulations. And so, it is incumbent on all kingdom citizens to gird themselves with the whole armour of God and stoutly defend the very faith which was handed over to us by those who have passed this way before us.

STUDY GUIDE

1. Why is it necessary for Kingdom citizens to contend for the faith? Jude 17- 19, Acts 20; 28- 31, 2 Peter 2;1- 3, 2 Tim. 2;17, 18, 2 Tim. 3; 1- 9
2. What is required of those who would contend for the faith? Jude 20- 22, Titus 2; 11- 13, 2 Tim. 2;14- 16, 22- 26, 1 Cor. 14; 37- 39, Eph. 1;17- 23
3. How should kingdom citizens contend for the faith? 1 Tim. 4; 11- 16, Matt. 28; 19- 21, 2 Tim. 1; 8, 9, 1 Tim. 6; 20, 21
4. Identify, from Jude 4- 16, the characteristic features of the enemies of the faith.

CONCLUSION: We know that our salvation is the most precious gift. It is our primal identity as kingdom citizens. We therefore have a supreme task to strive to protect it, standing up for what we believe, and being ever ready to sacrifice for it. Remember He is coming soon.

MEMORY VERSE: Jude Verse 3b “I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints”.

EXAMINE YOURSELF; Are you actively contending for the faith, or just watching from the pew?

STUDY 49

SUB-THEME: PRESSING FOR THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: Prepare for war: Pressures will come

AIM: To call the brethren's attention to the fact that

TEXT: Ephesians 6:10-20, 1 Timothy 4:12

INTRODUCTION: Pressures are difficulties, afflictions, grievances, and feelings of anxiety that people encounter in life's daily pursuits. They manifest as stress, tension, strain, etc. Pressures can come from negative emotional experiences, spiritual attacks, etc. A greater percentage of our physical problems result from the emotional and spiritual pressures we face every day. Nobody is immune to pressure.

Apostle Paul, in Ephesians 6:12 noted that kingdom citizens have to daily contend with pressures from a hierarchy of negative spiritual forces. Micah decries the gross injustice and exploitation of the poor which is prevalent in our society today. Many erstwhile kingdom citizens have fallen away because of pressures of life. Many others are at the verge of giving up, but the truth is that pressures are part of the landscape of faith (Heb. 11). They cannot be wished away.

STUDY GUIDE:

1. Discuss why the phrase "Prepare for War" is relevant in this end time. Ephesians 6:10-12.
2. Mention and explain the various forms of pressure experienced by kingdom citizens every day.
3. What forms of pressure do you think were experienced by the following persons: Jacob (Gen 27:6-17) Joseph (Gen 39:7-12) Ruth (Ruth 1:8-16) Three Hebrew slaves (Daniel 3: 12, 16-18) Daniel (Dan 6:8-22) Bartimeaus (Mark 10:46-50) Samson (Judges 16:4-6, 10-13, 15-17). Mark 10:46-50
5. How can we overcome the prevalent pressures of this end time? Eph. 6; 10- 20, Heb. 12:1-2, Matt 11:28-30, 1 John 2:15, Zephaniah 2:3, Psalm 37:3-7

CONCLUSION: Are you experiencing any form of pressure today? Let not your heart be troubled. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Commit whatever it is to Him, step out in faith, and you will see that God is bigger than any mountain or obstacle the enemy may have put before you.

MEMORY VERSE: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Isaiah 43:2.

STUDY 50

SUB-THEME: PRESSING FOR THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: Prepare for war: PERSECUTION WILL COME

AIM: To re-awaken brethren's consciousness to the fact that God permits persecution and other forms of suffering as integral part of the kingdom life and ministry.

TEXT: Mathew 5:10-12 Ephesians 6:10-20 Job 19:25-29

INTRODUCTION

We live in an era when humankind is doing everything possible to do away with sacrifice and suffering. In many of our Christian assemblies, concerted efforts are in top gear to literally expunge these terms from the gospel. Persecution is conceived, from several denominational perspectives, as a sign of spiritual laxity or manifestation of God's displeasure. But the scriptures are very clear on the fact that persecution and suffering are integral parts of prosperous Christian life and ministry. It is indeed a great privilege, a great honour, to suffer persecution for Christ's sake, who did not hide the fact that following Him is an express invitation to persecution. John 15; 18- 20

The Bible fact in this matter is that kingdom citizens are wont to mocked, ridiculed, defrauded, assaulted, and even killed. That Jesus would count us worthy of being His representatives and facing the same kind of treatment He faced is nothing to be ashamed of. It is on record that all of the New Testament apostles were murdered save one. We should therefore find strength and encouragement in the fact that persecution could somehow be a proof of our godliness. As 2 Timothy 3:12 puts it: "All who desire to live godly lives in union with Christ will suffer persecution"

This study is geared to remind us that God has not, and will never change His plan as to offer us an easier method of serving Him. Knowledge of this truth should awaken us from our deep stupor so we may be alert to face and endure persecution to the very end.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What do you understand by the term 'persecution'?
2. Why do Kingdom citizens suffer persecution? John 15; 18- 20, 2 Cor. 4; 11, Phil. 1; 29, John 16; 2, 1 Pet. 4; 1- 4
3. From the following scriptures, describe the nature of persecution experienced by the persons concerned, and why. Genesis 39:11-20 I Samuel 18; 6- 9, 19; 1, Esther 3:5,8-9 4:1-3, Job 3:25-26, Daniel 3:13-18, 6:10-11, 16-17, Matthew 26:47-49, 55; Act 5: 22-28, 14:19-20, 22:4-6
4. How should kingdom citizens react to persecution? Matt. 5; 12, 12, Acts 5; 40- 42, John 16:33, Galatians 6:9, Matthew 10:23- 28, I Corinthians 15:58, James 1:2-3, 12.

CONCLUSION: Faith that is refined by suffering can help us to see the Lord more clearly. The challenge is for you and I to remain focused on the Lord. The Christian that is living by the word of God is bound to experience persecution. Be strong always as to respond faithfully to the sufferings posed by all forms of persecution for when we have been tried, we shall come forth as gold.

MEMORY VERSE; James 1; 2, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverse temptations"

STUDY 51

SUB-THEME: PRESSING FOR THE KINGDOM

TOPIC: Prepare for war: BACKSLIDING AND EVER PRESENT REALITY

AIM: To provoke our actions against backsliding and destabilise negative insinuations of present day happenings.

TEXT: Jeremiah 3:12-14, 11 Timothy 3:1-5, Ephesians 6:10-18

INTRODUCTION: Backsliding is a slipping back; falling back into sin or error. It is the act of abandonment of faith or duty; a failure to maintain a higher state. Backsliding usually occurs where believers are unwilling to either surrender or do away with certain habits, attitudes, or lifestyle they cherish so much. Unrestrained indulgences, inordinate desire for riches and pleasures are the root causes of backsliding.

We live in an age where it is becoming increasingly difficult to cling tenaciously to the tenets of the kingdom life. As a matter of fact, the present generation of Christian men, women, youths and children are daily assailed by an avalanche of negative technological and social influences. Wherever one turns to, there must be forces in the environment dangling one negative carrot or the other to lure people away from the faith. It therefore takes a very strong resolve and commitment to hang on to the faith, even in the very eye of the storms of life.

STUDY GUIDE

6. List and explain some of the causes of backsliding. 1 John 2: 15-17. 1 Timothy 6:10, Matt 19:21-23, Num 22:7-20, Matt 6:24, Luke 12:16-21.
7. What are you expected to do when you backslide? Jeremiah 6:15-16 35:15a; Hosea 14:4-6, Matt 11:28-30, Galatians 5:16-17
8. What are the consequences of backsliding? Jeremiah 5:6 49:4-5
Rev: 21:8; 1 Cor. 6:7-10
9. How can we guard against backsliding? Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 2; 20, 5:16, Josh. 1; 8

CONCLUSION:

The last days will be marked by ever increasing wickedness in the world, collapse of moral standards and multiplication of false churches and false believers. Kingdom citizens should endeavour to shun every allurements to the wishy-washy gospel messages with which certain 'men of God' target the pockets of their audience, rather than their hearts. Genuine Christian leaders, preachers, and teachers of the gospel should make concerted efforts to equip their disciples with the undiluted Word of God.

MEMORY VERSE: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15 KJV).