



The Church of Pentecost

2021

Supplementary
BIBLE STUDY
&
HOME CELL GUIDE

COMPILED BY
NATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST



2021 SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLE STUDY AND HOME CELL GUIDE

*Compiled by
National Discipleship & Leadership Development Committee*

FOREWORD

The overarching theme for Vision 2023 as we are by now very well abreast of, is *“Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Values and Principles of the Kingdom of God”*. This overarching theme inspires us to raise an army of Christians who, being filled with the Holy Spirit and fully equipped with the knowledge of God’s word, will engage and transform their societies with godly values and principles. Thus, our overall goal is a church where members go to possess their nations by transforming every worldview, thought and behaviour with values, principles and lifestyles of the Kingdom of God and thereby turning many people to Christ.

In 2020, the Lord led us to the second step towards the possessing the nations agenda, under the theme, “A Glorious Church to Possess the Nations”. Our focus was to build a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish;” a “holy and blameless” bride prepared for the Bridegroom, which is Christ. We were made to understand that God is always working in His church through His people to prepare her as a glorious bride for Himself and to make her credible before the watching world. This is to make the church’s witness easier. For an untransformed church cannot transform the society. This theme therefore was to focus more on the goal of the church. To help us achieve this goal, specific topics including the following were rolled out to be treated throughout the year:

That there may be Glory in the Church, The Church: Called to a holy living, living a life of integrity as a Christian, and Possessing the nations through prayer. Others were, Raising Godly children to possess the nations, and I am an Agent of transformation.

However, in 2020, due to the ravaging effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to treat the theme effectively as expected. Since these annual themes are guiding steps towards the overarching theme, introducing a new theme, we believe, will distract the intended process towards the realization of the possessing the nations agenda.

In view of this, the Executive Council has prayerfully decided to repeat the 2020 annual theme for 2021. To this end the word “Revived” has been inserted into the theme for 2020 for the theme for 2021 being, “A Glorious Church, Revived to Possess the Nations”.

To this end, topics to be treated in the 2021 Bible Study and Home Cell manual remain the same as those of 2020, except with a few supplementary topics to be treated with the intention to spark off a revival in the church. For, we are fully convinced that if we have experienced a pandemic in our lifetime, we should also experience a revival in our lifetime that many would be brought to the salvation in Jesus Christ. This can only be made possible by the Holy Spirit through a glorious church which in itself is revived.

It is my prayer that the repetition of the theme will afford the church public the opportunity to delve much deeper into the theme, derive a better understanding of it, be affected by it and reach out to potential converts and members for Christ.

May the Lord continue to be with us and grant us the needed hunger and thirst for righteousness in our collective quest to experience lasting revival as a glorious church.

God bless us all and may 2021 be a glorious year!!

Aps. Eric Kwabena Nyamekye

Chairman, The Church of Pentecost

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The theme chosen by the Chairman and the Executive Council for the year 2021 is ‘A Glorious Church Revived to Possess the Nations’ (Ephesians 3: 21, 5; 27). Essentially, the 2021 theme is similar to that of 2020. The rationale for this unique direction flows from the backdrop of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that made it difficult for the church to thoroughly engage with the 2020 theme. However, the 2020 theme is significant and pivotal to the 5-year vision, “Possessing the Nations”, for it takes a glorious church to possess the nations. With this direction, most of the 2020 Bible Studies and Home Cell outlines will be repeated to enable the whole church to study the lessons.

This supplementary guide has been produced to provide direction on how the 2020 study outlines would be used since some activities on the 2021 Church Calendar have been either removed or scheduled on a different date. Additionally, some outlines on ‘Revival’ and issues of concern pertaining to false doctrine and false teaching have been covered comprehensively in a systematic study.

In this supplementary guide, the week by week guide is critical as it provides direction on how new lessons or lessons from the old manual would be used. For instance, in weeks where new lessons are to be studied, the lessons have been captured in this supplementary guide. However, where lessons from the 2020 Bible Study & Home Cell Guide are to be used, the pages of those lessons have been provided.

The effectiveness of the 2021 Bible Study and Home Cell classes, among other things, would be dependent on District Ministers being abreast of the schedule for each week and communicating same to all local Assemblies. Additionally, the effective organization of preparatory classes for Bible Study and Home Cell leaders

spear-headed by the district minister is highly recommended. The preparatory classes enhance the understanding of the material and also provide the opportunity for the minister to assess the effectiveness of the cells and study groups. As stated in previous editions, the emphasis of the study should be on how to apply lessons gleaned from the text to daily life. Thus, the Cell Leader should study the outline prayerfully and diligently ahead of the class.

As a Committee we are grateful to God for His unfailing guidance in developing and publishing scripts annually. We deeply acknowledge the Chairman, Apostle Eric Nyamekye for his visionary leadership and the ready support he extends to the Committee. Further, we commend the General Secretary, Apostle A. N. Y. Kumi-Larbi, the International Missions Director, Apostle Emmanuel Gyasi-Addo and the entire Executive Council Members for their commitment to discipleship in the Church of Pentecost. The members of the National Discipleship & Leadership Development Committee also deserve commendation for their painstaking efforts expended in the production of this year's manual. They are;

Pastor Henry Sowah Ako-Nai	Secretary
Apostle Vincent Anane-Denteh	Member
Apostle William Boakyie Agyarko	Member
Pastor Enoch Teye Narh	Member
Pastor Eric Ansah	LLTS Organiser
Pastor Joseph Owusu Boateng	Member

Samuel Kojo Gakpetor (Apostle)
(Coordinator, NDLDC)

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

2021 WEEK BY WEEK GUIDE FOR BIBLE STUDY & HOME CELL

WEEK	DATE	ACTIVITY	BIBLE STUDY (PAGE)	HOME CELL (PAGE)
JANUARY				
1	3 RD	LORD'S SUPPER		
2	10 TH	Local Week	Revival	Cell Social Impact
3	17 TH	Local Week	The Nature of Revival	Pastoral Care / Visitation
4	24 TH	Local Week	Repentance – A Catalyst for Revival	Pastoral Care / Visitation
5	31 ST	Gospel Sunday/ We Care Week	Revival – The Role of Intercessors	How to Use the Bible in Your Devotion <i>(refer to page 125 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
FEBRUARY				
6	7 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
7	14 TH	Bible Week/Gospel Sunday/ <i>Apostolisation</i>	Overcoming Obstacles to Revival	Cell Social Impact
8	21 ST	Local Week	Revival Leads to Restoration	Pastoral Care / Visitation
9	28 TH	Gospel Sunday/ <i>Apostolisation</i>	Maintaining Your Spiritual Fervour	Involvement in Community Initiative <i>(refer to page 54 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
MARCH				
10	7 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
11	14 TH	McKeown Missions Week	Supporting Missions Work <i>(refer to page 33 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
12	21 ST	Environmental Care Campaign	Environmental Care, Our Responsibility <i>(refer to page 57 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
13	28 TH	Gospel Sunday	Witnessing About Christ to Others <i>(refer to page 52 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Getting Stakeholders on Board <i>(refer to page 147 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
APRIL				
14	4 TH	EASTER SUNDAY		
15	11 TH	Local Week	Beware of False Teachers	Cell Social Impact
16	18 TH	Special Offering for IMD	How to Identify False Teaching	Pastoral Care / Visitation
17	25 TH	Gospel Sunday	How to Engage in Personal Evangelism <i>(refer to page 90 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Respect for Subordinates <i>(refer to page 136 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
MAY				
18	2 ND	LORD'S SUPPER		
19	9 TH	Local Week	Sources of False Teaching	Cell Social Impact
20	16 TH	Evangelism Ministry Week- long Activities	Effects on False Teaching	Pastoral Care / Visitation
21	23 RD	Local Week	Dreams about Heaven and Hell	Pastoral Care / Visitation
22	30 TH	Gospel Sunday	The Reward Personal Evangelism <i>(refer to page 73 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Investing Wisely <i>(refer to page 61 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>

JUNE				
23	6 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
24	13 TH	Youth Week-long Activities	Appropriate Dressing to Please God	Cell Social Impact
25	20 TH	Local Week	Responding to False Teaching in the Local Church	Pastoral Care / Visitation
26	27 TH	Gospel Sunday/ PU Offering Day	Raising Godly Christian Workforce (refer to page 69 of 2020 bible study manual)	Fellowship in the Local Church (refer to page 50 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)
JULY				
27	4 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
28	11 TH	Local Week	Upholding Truth and Justice in the Marketplace (refer to page 76 of 2020 bible study manual)	Cell Social Impact
29	18 TH	Local Week	The Cost of Laziness (refer to page 81 of 2020 bible study manual)	Pastoral Care / Visitation
30	25 TH	Gospel Sunday	The Role of the Holy Spirit in Witnessing (refer to page 98 of 2020 bible study manual)	Family Commitment to Biblical Values (refer to page 159 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)
AUGUST				
31	1 ST	LORD'S SUPPER		
32	8 TH	Local Week	Don't Withhold your Workers' Pay (refer to page 83 of 2020 bible study manual)	Cell Social Impact
33	15 TH	Local Week	Integrity in the Market Place (refer to page 165 of 2020 bible study manual)	Pastoral Care / Visitation
34	22 ND	Local Week	Don't Abuse the Privilege (refer to page 170 of 2020 bible study manual)	Pastoral Care / Visitation
35	29 TH	Gospel Sunday/ PENTSOS	Fulfilling the Social Responsibility of the Church (refer to page 78 of 2020 bible study manual)	The Local Church and Her Social Responsibility (refer to page 153 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)
SEPTEMBER				
36	5 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
37	12 TH	Children's Week	Jesus, Friend of Children (refer to page 86 of 2020 bible study manual)	Cell Social Impact
38	19 TH	Officers' Appreciation Day	Honouring Officers of the Church (refer to page 39 of 2020 bible study manual)	Pastoral Care / Visitation
39	26 TH	Gospel Sunday	Examine Yourself (refer to page 66 of 2020 bible study manual)	Mentoring the Youth (refer to page 63 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)
OCTOBER				
40	3 RD	LORD'S SUPPER		
41	10 TH	GPCC Week/ Outreach Day	Unity in the Body of Christ (refer to page 93 of 2020 bible study manual)	Cell Social Impact
42	17 TH	Local Week	Don't Compromise Your Christian Values (refer to page 176 of 2020 bible study manual)	Pastoral Care / Visitation
43	24 TH	Local Week	Bad Company Corrupts Good Character (refer to page 182 of 2020 bible study manual)	Pastoral Care / Visitation
44	31 ST	Gospel Sunday/ PENSIONS DAY	Remembering the Lord's Servants (refer to page 96 of 2020 bible study manual)	The Church is Holy and without Blemish (101) (refer to page 101 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)

NOVEMBER				
45	7 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
46	14 TH	Local Week	Church Discipline for Corporate Holiness <i>(refer to page 103 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
47	21 ST	Local Week	Restoring Disciplined Members to Fellowship <i>(refer to page 106 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
48	28 TH	Gospel Sunday	Truly Acknowledging Christ's Lordship <i>(refer to page 109 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	The Value of Strategic Plan <i>(refer to page 18 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
DECEMBER				
49	5 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
50	12 TH	Local Week	The Church as a Model of Society <i>(refer to page 189 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
51	19 TH	Local Week	The Lord Jesus Deserves Worship <i>(refer to page 115 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
52	26 TH	CHRISTMAS CONVENTION		
JANUARY 2022				
1	2 ND	LORD'S SUPPER		
	9 TH		In All Things, Give Thanks and Praise <i>(refer to page 113 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	
EXTRA LESSONS FOR USE				
EXTRA SCRIPTS TO BE USED		Tithing is Biblical		
		Discerning of Spirits		
		Discernment		
		Be mindful of Interpreters of Dreams and Visions		
		Jesus Christ – The focus of Eternity		
		Revival Engaging the Crises		
		Tithing-Recommended by Jesus <i>(refer to page 27 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>		
		Blessings of Tithing Faithfully <i>(refer to page 30 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>		
		The Focus of Eternity is Christ		
		Christ in You, the Hope of Glory <i>(refer to page 35 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>		
		The Church as a Glorious Institution <i>(refer to page 22 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>		
		Manifesting the Glory of God <i>(refer to page 37 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>		

NOTE:

1. This table together with the new scripts would be compiled into a booklet and dubbed, "Companion to 2021 Bible Study & Home Cell Manual". It would be used alongside the 2020 Bible Study Manual
2. The scripts in Red are newly written scripts and the page numbers will be captured later.
3. All other scripts are located in the 2020 Bible Study & Home Cell Manual. The number in bracket refers to the page where the study could be located.

BIBLE STUDY

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WEEK 2

REVIVAL

Main Text: Ezra 7: 8-10, 9: 1-6

Memory Verse: *Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you?* Psalm 85: 6

Introduction

The Babylonian captivity of the Jews brought severe consequences for their religious and social life. The temple, a revolving point of Israel's religious life and identity and the walls of Jerusalem which offered security were destroyed. Nonetheless, in fulfilment of prophecy (Dan 9: 25), King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return and rebuild the city after seventy years in exile (Ezra 1:1-11). God used 3 key leaders to restore the people to true spirituality. Zerubbabel was used to reconstruct the temple (Ezra 3:8), Nehemiah was used to rebuild the broken physical walls (Neh. 2:4) and Ezra was used to rebuild the spiritual walls. When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem with the second group, he discovered that God's people had not separated themselves from the detestable practices of their neighbouring pagan nations and had thus, lost their distinctiveness as God's chosen people. He therefore begins a revival to restore the people of God to true worship. Ezra's intentional and painstaking approach to rebuilding their spiritual walls is the subject of this study.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Ezra angry with the Israelites? (Ezra 9:1-3)
2. List three qualities (character traits) of Ezra as stated in Ezra 7:10.
3. Explain how each of these traits helped Ezra to lead a revival among his people?
4. What was the result of Ezra's intentional approach? Ezra 8:9, 12, 17.
5. From the discussions above, what do you consider as the most important requirement for spiritual awakening or revival in the Local Church?

Conclusion

Revival is a return to spiritual health after a period of decline into sin and broken fellowship with God. Revival is essential for God's people when they need to be forgiven and restored to spiritual health and vitality. The people of Israel had forsaken the way of the lord and therefore needed to be restored to true worship. Nevertheless, Ezra who led the revival did not hasten with programs but rather committed himself first to the study and obedience of God's word. He then proceeded to teach the laws of God in Israel.

The first lesson from the example of Ezra is that rebuilding the spiritual walls of the church must first start with the devotional life, spiritual intimacy and obedience of leadership to the word of God. Further to this, the teaching of the Word of God must be given priority in order to rebuild the spiritual walls of

members. As exemplified by Ezra, the Word provides the basis for all genuine revival. It is the response to the word of God that produces repentance and a spiritual thirst in a person. Thus, any effort at revival which does not emphasize the teaching of the word will produce shallow members without any trait of spiritual transformation.

WEEK 3

THE NATURE OF REVIVAL

Text: Acts 4: 23-37.

Memory Verse: *And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. – Acts 4:31, KJV*

Introduction

In this study we shall look at the meaning, motivation, means, marks and measure of revival. For the purpose of this lesson, revival is defined as the outflow of the church's conscious awareness of her vulnerability with sustained dialogue with God to see His will done on earth through her as energised by the Holy Spirit. The motivation for revival is the desire of the church to have a clean break with the world – a lifestyle which is ignoble, mean, vulgar, in bad taste, ill-mannered, shallow, vindictive, self-centred, and corrupt. This enables the church to experience restoration of godly fortunes and values, fruitfulness, attractiveness, renewal of passion for moral integrity, fervent prayer, doctrinal purity, ministerial excellence, and unfettered love.

Questions for Reflection

1. What did the Council decide to do to halt the apostles' witness to the death and resurrection of Christ? Verse 15-18.
2. How did the disciples respond to the report of threats they received from Peter and John? Verse 24-30.

3. Identify the specific request that the disciples placed before God. Verses 29 and 30.
4. What happened immediately after the disciples had prayed? Verse 31.
5. How did the Holy Spirit manifest himself in the church after He had filled them? Verse 32-35.
6. What do you think your church can do to experience lasting revival?

Conclusion

The means to revival involve extensive sessions of Bible study and teaching, prevailing sessions of effectual fervent prayers, genuine self-examination, and preparedness to pay the price. With these in place, the marks of revival become evident. It is the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit to bless the church with spectacular events, prophetic messages, harvest of souls, consciousness of sin, cry for holiness, generous giving, all embracing brotherly love and rapid growth and expansion of the church. Measure of Revival – The impact of a revival is far-reaching. The blessings are experienced by individuals, groups, organisations, nations, and globally. This happens provided the church continues to keep abreast of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling her mandate with the appropriate sacrifices and exemplary lives especially of the corporate managers of God's resources.

WEEK 4

REPENTANCE – A CATALYST FOR REVIVAL

Text : 2 Chronicles 7, 12-15

Memory Verse: *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* 2 Chronicles 7,14. KJV

Introduction

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, revival is a reawakening of religious fervour, especially by means of evangelistic meetings. Genuine and lasting revivals must be birthed (not organised) by saints who conceive righteousness and passion for souls without monetary motives. On the other hand, repentance which acts as a catalyst to the break, buoyancy and blessings of lasting revival is the feeling of intense sorrow for going contrary to the will of God by deeds, thoughts, utterances, desires and things looked at, often to the hurt of others. What complements repentance is the genuine confession of the misdeed and a resolve to abstain from it. It is also essential to state that repentance needs to be both vertical and horizontal. In each case the offending party must show genuine remorse and ask for forgiveness while the offended party must be gracious to forgive offences.

Questions for Reflection

1. What assurance did God give to Solomon? V.12
2. With what acts did God warn Israel He would bring hardship on them? V.13.

3. Identify the process of repentance that God recommends to His people. V.14a
4. How will God respond to His children when they show genuine repentance? V.14b.
5. Discuss some of the personal sins and group sins to be confessed in a church yearning for lasting revival.

Conclusion

Solomon had completed the building of the Temple and made all arrangements for its dedication (2 Chronicles 5,1-7). Following a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the successful completion of the project, Solomon petitioned the LORD to temper justice with mercy in the event of Israel sinning against Him (2 Chronicles 6,24-30, 36-39). Key elements of the petition show that the king was familiar with the curses that God had outlined for Israel should they disobey Him (Deuteronomy 28, 24-68). From the passage read God outlines specific steps that His children need to take to have audience with Him and be restored to a life of plenty and prosperity (2 Chronicles 7,14). Churches often hasten to present petitions to God, but appear reluctant to live by the conditions attached to His granting the reliefs sought. Lasting revivals break out when both leaders and members appear before God as people who need God's forgiveness and then confess their sins – hidden and open – to one another. Failing this, what we experience as revivals are passing events without depth.

WEEK 5

REVIVAL – THE ROLE OF INTERCESSORS

Text: Nehemiah 1:1-4

Memory Verse: *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.* – Nehemiah 1: 4.

Introduction

Judah's disobedience and abject waywardness engendered their spiritual distancing from God. They eventually suffered Babylonian attack and captivity. After seventy years of exile, they had the opportunity to begin the difficult reconstruction of Jerusalem left in ruins by the captivity. Zerubbabel, Joshua and Haggai led the first batch of returnees to begin the reconstruction. They raised the altar and eventually rebuilt the Temple. But Jerusalem was still without walls with spiritual, security, socio-economic, cultural and racial implications. It was against this backdrop that Nehemiah appeared on the scene to address rippling effects of the national disaster.

Questions for Reflection

1. What three things did Nehemiah seek to know from Hanani and his colleagues? Verse 2.
2. How did the people respond to the questions? Verse 3.
3. Why do you think Nehemiah afflicted himself as stated in verse 4?

4. Can you identify some walls which appear to have been broken down in the church?
5. What should the church do in times of national and even global crises?

Conclusion

The walls of the earth appear to have been broken down. Satan is hard at the heels of humanity using moral decadence and false teachings to destroy precious lives. Yet God is still on the throne and will not leave humanity to be destroyed. Nevertheless, He is looking for human vessels to position themselves as His partners to roll back the raging waves of the ungodly. We cannot afford to disappoint Him.

The deep depression associated with Covid-19, for instance, to which we are exposed calls for divine intervention. Nothing but sincere appeal to the sovereignty of God can be the road to deliverance that can neither be found in medical science nor political rhetoric. This is where the church can stand in the gap for the nations. However, God is looking for men and women with deep love for Him and humanity who will be willing to pay the price for the task of stemming the tide of the pandemic. Who knows that a mighty revival will follow the pandemic?

WEEK 7

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO REVIVAL

Text: Nehemiah 4: 9-20

Memory Verse: *In what place therefore ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.* – Nehemiah 4:20

Introduction

Nehemiah, the leader put his confidence in God. He inspired the people to believe in and be committed to the vision of the reconstruction of Jerusalem. Thus the Jews watched as much as they prayed. They prayed to seek God's favour in the work at hand for good success. They prayed for God to protect them against the plans of the enemy. They prayed for wisdom to take the right decisions on the job, and they prayed for the determination to complete the job come what may.

Questions for Reflection

1. What did the people do to overcome obstacles to their work? Verse 9.
2. What did Nehemiah do when he received news of a planned enemy attack on his people? Verse 13 and 14.
3. How else did Nehemiah prepare his people to ward off the planned enemy attack? Verses 16-18.
4. Identify some practical lessons that the church can use in her efforts to experience a lasting revival.

Conclusion

The Jews made prudent use of insider information (Neh. 4:12). Nehemiah inspired the people to rest on the greatness and goodness of God (v.14). Both the leaders and the people committed themselves to a mission strategy (verses 16-18). The nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people readily submitted to the assigned leadership of Nehemiah (verse 19 and 20), and the people worked cheerfully even under severe hardships (verse 23).

To experience and enjoy lasting revival in the church, it is necessary for church leaders to know that revivals do not come without obstacles. To this end, there is the need for church leaders to adhere to prudent leadership principles. It is when church leaders are seen by their followers as passionate about values and principles that define revival that both groups labour in prayer, fasting and doctrinal depth to birth and nurture revival as ordained by God.

WEEK 8

REVIVAL LEADS TO RESTORATION

Text: Joel 2:12-28

Memory Verse: *Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God. – Joel 2:17.*

Introduction

The book of Joel opens with a description of the devastation caused by swarms of divers kinds of locusts, accompanied by a terrible drought. The plague of locusts, one of the most dreadful scourges of the East, is highly suggestive of an invasion of hostile legions such as have often ravaged Judea; and many have understood it to be the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, or Romans. The prophet, however, summons the stricken people to fasting and penitence, and encourages them by promising the removal of the divine judgments and the return of fertility. While describing this returning plenty and prosperity, the prophet casts his view forward on a future still more remote, and predicts the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the signs and wonders and spiritual prosperity of the Messiah's reign (Joel 2:28).

Questions for Reflection

1. How did God say His people should turn to Him? Verse 12.
2. What attributes of God come to play when His people repent? Verse 13.

3. Who were those to be gathered for the solemn assembly? Verse 15 and 16.
4. What blessings did God promise to His people? Verses 24-28.
5. How can the church position herself to experience meaningful revival?

Conclusion

It can be said that the ignoble practices for which Judah suffered exist in the church today, only in different forms. There is hatred, betrayal, envy and jealousy and moral impropriety among church leaders and members. Some of them sometimes become guilty of nepotism and favouritism. In some cases, people become dangerously interested in empire building. It cannot also be said that church leaders are at times not neglected and even despised by the very people they risk their lives to shepherd. Against the above background, the church needs conscious repentance, and breaking of her fallow ground as she looks forward to the promised showers of blessings. For, the vitality of effectual fervent prayer is rooted in obedience to God.

PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING STUDY OUTLINE IN THE 2020 BIBLE STUDY MANUAL

9	28TH	Gospel Sunday/ <i>Apostolisation</i>	Maintaining Your Spiritual Fervour	Involvement in Community Initiative <i>(refer to page 54 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
MARCH				
10	7TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
11	14TH	McKeown Missions Week	Supporting Missions Work <i>(refer to page 33 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
12	21ST	Environmental Care Campaign	Environmental Care, Our Responsibility <i>(refer to page 57 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
13	28TH	Gospel Sunday	Witnessing About Christ to Others <i>(refer to page 52 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Getting Stakeholders on Board <i>(refer to page 147 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
APRIL				
14	4TH	EASTER SUNDAY		
15	11TH	Local Week	Beware of False Teachers	Cell Social Impact

WEEK 9

MAINTAINING YOUR SPIRITUAL FERVOUR

Main Text: Rev 3: 14-18

Memory Verse: *Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervour serving the Lord* – Rom 12:11

Introduction

History has shown that periods of intense revival are sometimes followed by times of spiritual apathy towards the things of God. Such lethargic disposition towards spiritual growth and advancement of the Kingdom can be dealt with when we maintain our spiritual fervour. Spiritual fervour can be defined as intense passion, interest and enthusiasm for the things of God. This is very important because God's Kingdom is driven by Spirit-filled and zealous Christians who dare to transform their spheres with the gospel of Christ and values of the kingdom of God. In view of the foregoing, Paul's command to 'never be lacking in zeal' is a wakeup call to avoid complacency which could eventually dampen our love, zeal, and passion for the kingdom business.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to be 'neither hot nor cold' as a Christian? Verse 14
2. How does verse 17 reflect the attitude of Christians who are indifferent to their spiritual growth and the kingdom business?

3. Discuss factors that account for loss of spiritual fervour?
4. What are the effects of losing spiritual passion and zeal?
5. How can we maintain our spiritual fervour irrespective of our past spiritual experiences and achievements?

Conclusion

Spiritual fervour is an intense yearning, zeal and enthusiasm for the things of God initiated and sustained by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, being 'neither hot nor cold' implies the condition of being indifferent to the cause of the kingdom and consequently, the personal spiritual empowerment needed for such tasks. This is often caused by laziness, lack of fellowship with the Holy Spirit and worldliness. It is important to note that, soulish strength is not the same as spiritual fervour. When we lose our spiritual fervour, we become lethargic, and apathetic to issues pertaining to the kingdom of God. Zeal can wane and fervour diminish with time. However engaging in spiritual disciplines daily will always increase our zeal, passion and enthusiasm for the things of God. Some of these spiritual disciplines include prayer, fasting, meditation, solitude, bible study, and service. Daily, it is our responsibility to 'fan into flame' our passion and enthusiasm for the kingdom business in order to maintain and increase our spiritual fervour.

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WEEK 15

BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHERS

Main Text: 2 Peter 2: 1- 8

Memory Verse: *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves* - Matt. 7:15

Introduction

The Bible is replete with warnings about false teachers. In general, false teachers can be categorised under two main groups; those who are genuinely in error due to ignorance and others who distort the truth for ulterior motives. Irrespective of the backgrounds and motives of false teachers, false teaching constitutes a major threat to the preservation of the true gospel and unity of the body of Christ. It is therefore important to be reminded of what the Bible says about false teachers, their activities and the effect of their teachings on immature and unstable Christians.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the cardinal mark of false teachers? Verse 1
2. Why do false teachers pervert the truth? verse 3
3. Who are the target of false teachers? Acts 20:29
4. Discuss why their methods are likened to the way of Balaam. Verse. 15, Nu 31:16
5. How would you handle a false teacher if you encountered one?

Conclusion

The striking characteristic of false teachers according to the scriptures is the introduction of heresies and doctrines that deny Jesus Christ as the Lord and saviour of the world. For dishonest gain, they pervert the truth to attract a large following. Usually, they do not seek the lost but target the flock in the church with deceptive teachings. False teachers are likened to Balaam because he perverted the truth for material gain (Nu 31:16; Nu 25:1-9). In 1 Peter 2: 16 -18, false teachers are described as wells without water, and clouds carried by the tempest. This is to point out their deceptive nature, emptiness and detachment from Christ who is the source of streams of living water (Col. 2:8). We must be careful not to give audience to false teachers by feeding on their materials or patronising their programs (Rom. 16:17). They are very cunning and must be avoided at all cost.

PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING STUDY OUTLINE IN THE 2020 BIBLE STUDY MANUAL

16	18 TH	Special Offering for IMD	How to Identify False Teaching	Pastoral Care / Visitation
17	25 TH	Gospel Sunday	How to Engage in Personal Evangelism <i>(refer to page 90 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Respect for Subordinates <i>(refer to page 136 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
MAY				
18	2 ND	LORD'S SUPPER		
19	9 TH	Local Week	Sources of False Teaching	Cell Social Impact
20	16 TH	Evangelism Ministry Week-long Activities	Effects on False Teaching	Pastoral Care / Visitation
21	23 RD	Local Week	Dreams about Heaven and Hell	Pastoral Care / Visitation
22	30 TH	Gospel Sunday	The Reward Personal Evangelism <i>(refer to page 73 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Investing Wisely <i>(refer to page 61 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>

WEEK 16

HOW TO IDENTIFY FALSE TEACHING

Main Text: 1 Tim. 6: 3-5; Acts 17: 11

Memory Verse: *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ* - Col. 2:8

Introduction

To identify is the ability to recognise a thing for what it really is. False teaching is one major threat to Christianity. This is because false teachers often start with sound doctrine and at some point begin to introduce erroneous teaching. This makes it difficult for the immature and undiscerning to spot the difference. In addition, they neglect the whole counsel of God and emphasise the error of their teaching consistently. Overtime, the error becomes plausible to their listeners due to the repetitive emphasis with scriptures taken out of context. In view of this, we must be armed with the basic knowledge of how to identify false teaching.

Questions for Discussion

1. How do false teachers present their message? (Verse 18, Rom. 16:18, Jude 1:16)
2. What is the basic content of false teaching? (1 Tim.6 :3)
3. Why does false teaching sometimes sound like the truth?
4. Discuss why false teaching seems to flourish in these times.

5. How can Christians guard against false teaching (Acts 17: 10, Rom. 16:17)

Conclusion

False teaching often neglects the simplicity of the gospel for high and great things which have no link with the finished work of Christ (2 Cor. 11: 3-4). Pretending to have unique interpretation of the secret things of God, and departing from right belief, false teaching is not Christ-centred (Col. 2:8). Rather, it imposes restrictions on the flesh as requirement for salvation but provides no help in dealing with the sinful desires of mankind (Col. 2:23). On the other extreme, false teaching induces people to embrace and accommodate all manner of sinful lifestyle in keeping with their interpretation of what liberty in Christ entails. Basically, false teaching does not agree with the words of Christ and the whole counsel of God that reflect godliness (1 Tim. 6:3). False teaching thrives in situations where people are not ready to put up with sound doctrine but rather crave for something spectacular, though outside the basic message of the gospel. More so, many believers who are ignorant of the Scriptures become easy prey for false teachers. Thus, the antidote to false teaching is believers who are abreast of the whole counsel of God and are ready to remain in the basic message of Christ.

WEEK 19

SOURCES OF FALSE TEACHING

Main Text: 1 Tim. 1: 1-10

Memory Verse: *Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them* (KJV). – Rom. 16:18

Introduction

False teaching originates from several factors. These include the gospel's interaction with different cultures, inordinate craving for wealth by some people, and ignorance of the whole counsel of God, and misunderstanding of difficult passages in the Bible. Others are the desire by self-acclaimed prophets to be accorded exclusive status in the introduction of new doctrine or interpretation of scripture. Daily, we come into contact with such contemporary knowledge and teachings which could lead us into falsehood. Our discussion today seeks to enlighten us on these entry points so we can take measures to avert their influence in the body of Christ.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Timothy asked to remain in Ephesus? Verse 3, 4
2. What were the likely sources of false doctrine in the church?
1 Tim 1: 4, 4:1-3,
3. How can one ensure that they interpret the Scriptures in harmony with sound doctrine?

4. Discuss examples of contemporary knowledge and teachings that could subtly lead Christians into error.
5. How can you guard against these sources of false doctrine?

Conclusion

One source of false doctrine in the church in Ephesus was a group of people who were not qualified to teach but had assumed titles as teachers of the Law. As a result, Paul instructed Timothy not to allow such people to peddle falsehood through their teachings. Usually, people without the requisite training to handle the Scriptures introduce a lot of error in their delivery. On the other hand, those who have been trained could drift from orthodoxy in their bid to bring about novel interpretations of both simple and difficult passages of the Bible. Other times, the fear of being branded as conservative and unaccommodating of the culture of people groups, causes people to interpret the Scriptures to be acclaimed. Finally, the fascination of teaching or sharing contemporary knowledge accessed from various media without proper checks could spread false teaching in the church. These entry points of false teaching must be guarded against. This is because we live in an increasingly pluralistic, diverse and global world where there is an attempt to discredit absolute truth in favour of personal interpretations.

WEEK 20

EFFECTS OF FALSE TEACHING

Main Text: Gal. 5: 1-10

Memory Verse: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (KJV)*

– Gal. 5: 1

Introduction

False teachings have dire consequences for both false teachers and their hearers. A cursory look at church history reveals that every dispensation of time has had its own struggle dealing with the menace of false teaching. In the Old Testament people suffered plagues and missed God's providence because they heeded the counsel of false teaching. Also, churches in the New Testament were also rocked by the false teaching on circumcision as a requirement for salvation. Today, we shall examine the effects of false teaching on the body of Christ and the believer using the churches in Galatia as case study.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why were the believers entreated to stand firm? Verse 1
2. How was circumcision going to affect their liberty in Christ? Verse 3-4
3. Discuss the statement, 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump' in relation to the effect of false teaching on the church. Verse 9
4. How does false teaching lead people into bondage?

5. Share some of the negative effects of false teaching you have witnessed.

Conclusion

The churches in Galatia had received sound doctrine from Paul but were distracted by false teachers (Acts 15:1). Paul, recognising that this false teaching would eventually lead the believers back into bondage, entreated the churches in Galatia to uphold the doctrine that salvation comes by grace through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8). False doctrine leads people into bondage, and self-indulgence. Thus, a little leaven leavens the whole lump, (Acts 5:9) implies that the minutest drop of false doctrine, can subtly influence the conduct of a person or a whole congregation such that they eventually become totally alienated from Christ. Other effects of false teaching include harsh treatment of the body (Col. 2: 20-23), schisms and divisions in churches (Rom 16:17), doctrinal blasphemy (2 Pet. 2:2) and shameless moral misconduct of believers (Rom 1:28, 2 Peter 2:18).

WEEK 21

**DREAMS AND REVELATIONS ABOUT
HEAVEN AND HELL**

Main Text: Luke 16:26-31

Memory Verse: *But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'*"

Introduction

Visions and dreams about heaven and hell constitute one area of concern in dealing with false teaching in the body of Christ. Many times, these subjective experiences and in some cases, unsubstantiated claims of people have become the foundation of doctrine and core values in some churches. It is therefore necessary to note that, though visions and dreams are channels of revelatory gifts, they risk becoming a bedrock of false doctrine if not handled well. Today, we shall engage on how to handle the myriad of revelations about heaven and hell being circulated through various media such as books, television, radio and social media.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the response to the rich man's plea mean for us today? verse 28 -30
2. What does the phrase, Moses and the Prophets represent in the passage? verse 31
3. What should be our response to doctrine and practices built on the foundation of revelations and dreams about heaven and hell?

4. How can we maintain a healthy balance between sticking to sound doctrine and not despising revelations?
5. Discuss how the account of some dreams and revelations from people differ from what the Scriptures has revealed about heaven and hell.

Conclusion

In the passage, the rich man's request was denied though it seemed a very good idea. Many a time, people seek mysterious encounters to authenticate the ways of God. However, God has chosen his word as the primary source of information and revelation, hence the reference to Moses and the Prophets. Thus, other sources of revelation must not override but rather, reflect the Scriptures. Dreams and visions are vehicles for conveying revelatory gifts like word of wisdom, word of knowledge and discerning of spirits. However, they are very subjective experiences whose meanings may vary in relation to contexts and personalities to whom the message is addressed. As Pentecostals, we are aware that just as God communicates through dreams and visions, evil spirits can use the same channel to bring confusion. It is thus important for us to always subject the contents of these revelations to critical review using the bible as the standard of judgement. Thus we forestall conjectures gaining grounds to contradict sound doctrine.

PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING STUDY OUTLINE IN THE 2020 BIBLE STUDY MANUAL

JUNE				
23	6 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
24	13 TH	Youth Week- long Activities	Appropriate Dressing to Please God	Cell Social Impact
25	20 TH	Local Week	Responding to False Teaching in the Local Church	Pastoral Care / Visitation
26	27 TH	Gospel Sunday / PU Offering Day	Raising Godly Christian Workforce <i>(refer to page 69 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Fellowship in the Local Church <i>(refer to page 50 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
JULY				
27	4 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
28	11 TH	Local Week	Upholding Truth and Justice in the Marketplace <i>(refer to page 76 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
29	18 TH	Local Week	The Cost of Laziness <i>(refer to page 81 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
30	25 TH	Gospel Sunday	The Role of the Holy Spirit in Witnessing <i>(refer to page 98 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Family Commitment to Biblical Values <i>(refer to page 159 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>

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WEEK 24

APPROPRIATE DRESSING TO PLEASE GOD

Main Text: 1 Timothy 2:8-10

Memory Verse: *The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them (NIV).* – Gen. 3:21.

Introduction

When God created humanity, He clothed them in His glory. Thus though they were physically naked, they did lack a covering until the fall. After the fall, humanity fell short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23) and their nakedness began to bother them. Unfortunately, their attempts at covering their nakedness further revealed their corrupt minds (Gen. 3:7). What can fig leaves cover? Some prohibitions or prescriptions on gender specific clothing and use of ornaments engender controversial teachings in our days. In today's lesson, we will look at what the Scriptures say about the use of ornaments and clothing that please God.

Questions for Discussion

1. What three things does Paul suggest should be considered in dressing? Verse 9.
2. What message should our dressing convey to the world? Verse 10, 1 Peter 3:4.
3. How does the use of ornaments and makeup violate God's prescription on dressing?
4. Does God affirm or forbid the use of jewellery and braided hairstyles? (Ezek. 16:11, 13).

5. God will endorse a woman in decent trousers but frown on a woman in a dress that reveals her thighs and other parts of her body unduly? Discuss.

Conclusion

Creation has been adorned by God for beauty and elegance, yet in modesty and decency. Take a look at a flower and how it is adorned! The psalmist speaks of humanity being wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). God appreciates beauty but abhors that which is extravagant and indecent. The use of ornaments and fine clothes are not against the dictates of God. What God prohibits is dressing in fine clothing with glamorous jewellery to march when the inner person is 'naked' (1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 Pet. 3:3, 4). Again, making a hard and fast rule about what is male and female wear cannot apply universally. In every culture, there is a way of dressing for the people. It is common in Scotland to see the men dressed in skirts, while women wearing trousers is common across the globe. When Adam and Eve needed clothes, they went for fig leaf which was not decent. God provided a more durable, decent and modest alternative crafted from animal skins. Truly, God appreciates what we wear provided our outlook is decent, appropriate and modest, and we honour Him in our character.

WEEK 25

**RESPONDING TO FALSE TEACHING
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH**

Main Text: Acts 15: 1-21

Memory Verse: *Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?— Acts 15:10*

Introduction

Church history abounds with conscious efforts made by leadership to provide clarity and curtail abuses emanating from wrong interpretation of scriptures. While the edict from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15: 1-21) addressed the simmering tension between Jewish Christians and gentile converts, Martin Luther's response to heresies of his day brought about tremendous reforms within the church. Thus, it suffices to say that these informed and Spirit-led interventions have preserved the body of Christ from the ravaging effects of false teaching. Our discussion today will help us to identify the most appropriate method to use in responding to false teaching within the local church.

Questions for Discussion

1. How did Barnabas and Paul respond to the false teaching propagated by Jews in the Gentile churches? Verse 2
2. Discuss what went into the amicable settlement of this internal wrangling Verse 5-21

3. How should the local church respond to false teaching within their ranks?
4. At what point should such issues be reported to higher authority in the church?
5. What should each member do in fighting false teaching in the local church?

Conclusion

Spreading the gospel to the gentile lands witnessed remarkable success leading to the conversion of many people to the Lord. However, the insistence on the necessity of converted Gentiles being circumcised, by certain teachers from Judea threatened the stability of the budding church. The apostles having assembled to consider the question, listened to all sides of the matter and provided direction for the churches to follow. Responding to false teaching in the local church must be done prayerfully, using the word of God as basis for their ruling.

People who peddle falsehood should be warned and gently instructed in the way of the Lord. However, the right channels of authority must be engaged to ensure the amicable settlement of such disputes. Also, every member of the church must be vigilant and discerning to preserve the doctrinal integrity of the church at the grassroots. Teachings which are not in accord with sound doctrine must not be tolerated regardless of how harmless it appears. In addition, we must embrace the direction of leadership to protect the church from pests, wolves and bad seeds.

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PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING STUDY OUTLINE IN THE 2020 BIBLE STUDY MANUAL

AUGUST				
31	1 ST	LORD'S SUPPER		
32	8 TH	Local Week	Don't Withhold your Workers' Pay <i>(refer to page 83 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
33	15 TH	Local Week	Integrity in the Market Place <i>(refer to page 165 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
34	22 ND	Local Week	Don't Abuse the Privilege <i>(refer to page 170 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
35	29 TH	Gospel Sunday/ PENTSOS	Fulfilling the Social Responsibility of the Church <i>(refer to page 78 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	The Local Church and Her Social Responsibility <i>(refer to page 153 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
SEPTEMBER				
36	5 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
37	12 TH	Children's Week	Jesus, Friend of Children <i>(refer to page 86 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
38	19 TH	Officers' Appreciation Day	Honouring Officers of the Church <i>(refer to page 39 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
39	26 TH	Gospel Sunday	Examine Yourself <i>(refer to page 66 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Mentoring the Youth <i>(refer to page 63 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
OCTOBER				
40	3 RD	LORD'S SUPPER		
41	10 TH	GPCC Week/ Outreach Day	Unity in the Body of Christ <i>(refer to page 93 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
42	17 TH	Local Week	Don't Compromise Your Christian Values <i>(refer to page 176 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
43	24 TH	Local Week	Bad Company Corrupts Good Character <i>(refer to page 182 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
44	31 ST	Gospel Sunday/ PENSIONS DAY	Remembering the Lord's Servants <i>(refer to page 96 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	The Church is Holy and without Blemish (101) <i>(refer to page 101 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
NOVEMBER				
45	7 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
46	14 TH	Local Week	Church Discipline for Corporate Holiness <i>(refer to page 103 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
47	21 ST	Local Week	Restoring Disciplined Members to Fellowship <i>(refer to page 106 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
48	28 TH	Gospel Sunday	Truly Acknowledging Christ's Lordship <i>(refer to page 109 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	The Value of Strategic Plan <i>(refer to page 18 of 2020 Home Cell Manual)</i>
DECEMBER				
49	5 TH	LORD'S SUPPER		
50	12 TH	Local Week	The Church as a Model of Society <i>(refer to page 189 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Cell Social Impact
51	19 TH	Local Week	The Lord Jesus Deserves Worship <i>(refer to page 115 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	Pastoral Care / Visitation
52	26 TH			
CHRISTMAS CONVENTION				
JANUARY 2022				
1	2 ND	LORD'S SUPPER		
	9 TH		In All Things, Give Thanks and Praise <i>(refer to page 113 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	

EXTRA SCRIPTS

EXTRA LESSONS FOR USE		
EXTRA SCRIPTS TO BE USED	Tithing is Biblical	
	Discerning of Spirits	
	Discernment	
	Be mindful of Interpreters of Dreams and Visions	
	Jesus Christ – The focus of Eternity	
	Revival Engaging the Crises	
	Tithing-Recommended by Jesus <i>(refer to page 27 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	
	Blessings of Tithing Faithfully <i>(refer to page 30 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	
	The Focus of Eternity is Christ	
	Christ in You, the Hope of Glory <i>(refer to page 35 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	
	The Church as a Glorious Institution <i>(refer to page 22 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	
	Manifesting the Glory of God <i>(refer to page 37 of 2020 bible study manual)</i>	

TITHING IS BIBLICAL

Main Text: Matt. 23:16-23

Memory Verse: ... *These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone* (KJV) – Matt. 23:23b

Introduction

Tithing as a Christian practice has come under scathing attacks from false teaching in recent times. Proponents of such erroneous teaching advance that tithing is an Old Testament practice which has become obsolete with the coming of the New Testament and thus, irrelevant to the Christian today. However, it is important to note that tithing came before the Law and can therefore not be tied to the existence. Our discussion today seeks to critically assess some of the foundations of these false teachings to enable us respond appropriately in time of need.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was Jesus' main concern in the passage read? Verse 16 -23
2. Did Jesus say anything to suggest that paying tithe should end? Verse 23
3. Discuss the import of the statement, 'this you ought to have done without neglecting the former'. Verse 23b
4. In what ways do false teaching on tithing affect the church?
5. How should Christians respond to false teaching on tithing?

Conclusion

Jesus' concern in the passage was the hypocrisy of the Pharisees which was expressed in their false balance. Thus, they were chastised for their intolerance, misplaced zeal and neglect of the weightier matters. In the passage, nothing was said to suggest tithe payment was an Old Testament practice that needed to be abandoned. The Pharisees were instructed to attend to the weightier matters of justice, mercy and faith, in addition to their faithfulness in tithing. In this passage, Jesus emphasised inclusion not exclusion. By implication, all of them were important in expressing true obedience to God. Thus, since justice, mercy, and faith are timeless principles whose relevance has not ceased with the passing of any law, faithfulness in tithing must likewise continue. The work of God has not ceased on earth and thus, the giving a tenth of our income to support the advancement of the kingdom of God cannot be said to run counter to the whole counsel of God. False teaching on tithing must not be entertained in anyway by Christians because it stifles the work of God on earth.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Main Text: Acts 16:16 – 23; 1 Cor. 12:10

Memory Verse: *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world* – 1 John 4: 1

Introduction

In the previous studies, we discussed issues pertaining to the nature and effects of false teaching. Having highlighted the threat of false teaching, it is important to stress that, the Christian is not at the mercy of this onslaught. God in his infinite wisdom has made available spiritual resources to help us overcome the cunning and deceptive ways of the evil one. Discerning of spirits is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which enables the believer to know the spirit behind the conduct, and operations of false teachers. Without this gift, some believers may fall victim to deceptive teachings and operation of familiar spirits.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the occupation of the slave girl? Verse 16
2. Discuss how her pronouncement would have affected the work of Paul and Silas among the Gentiles.
3. What do you know about the gift of discerning of spirits? 1 Cor. 12: 10
4. How did Paul manifest the gift in the narrative?
5. What must we do to avoid being deceived by seemingly good teachings and prophecies?

Conclusion

Discerning of spirits is a one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 4-12). This gift enables the Christian to discern the spirit behind a manifestation, that is whether an utterance or operation is from the human spirit, an evil spirit or the Holy Spirit. In the passage read, the slave girl predicted accurately through the agency of divination. Thus, just as the magicians in Egypt performed the same miracle as Moses did (Ex 7:11), evil spirits can sometimes manifest in a person to prophesy, foretell, or perform miracles. Nonetheless, the manifestation of discerning of spirits in the life of Christians would expose false prophecies, false teaching and false prophets in our communities, workplaces and churches. Thus, it suffices to say that the expulsion of the evil spirit from the slave girl was sufficient proof that the apostles were really from God and not people in alliance with the spirit of divination. It is worthy of note that discerning of spirits is not mind reading, prejudice, psychological insight or fault-finding. Rather, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit we must seek earnestly in an age full of deception.

DISCERNMENT

Main Text: Hebrews 5: 11-15

Memory Verse: *And this is my prayer, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth in insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ*
– Phil. 1: 9-10

Introduction

Discernment is a valuable trait which allows those who possess it to notice and appropriate what is obscure or hidden to the immature. Basically, discernment empowers the believer to distinguish clearly between good and evil. This enables the believer to appraise doctrine, teaching or dicey situations in the light of God's direction or counsel without struggle. There is a difference between having discernment and the gift of discerning of spirits. Whereas the former refers to insight gained from experience and continuous practice rooted in sound doctrine, the latter is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We must therefore teach about this and pray to God to bless the church with both. In view of this, our discussion today will highlight the necessity of discernment as an aspect of spiritual maturity developed through consistent bible reading and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does milk and solid food represent in the passage? Verse 12-13

2. According to verse 14, how are mature Christians able to discern both good and evil?
3. Discuss the role of consistent Bible study and prayer in Christian maturity.
4. What is the difference between discernment and discerning of spirits?
5. How will the church fare if majority have discernment?

Conclusion

False teaching thrives where people are not acquainted with teachings on the finished work of Christ and what it means for their salvation and victorious life as believers. Such persons can be described as still feeding on milk, clearly indicating their inability to understand and appropriate truth contained in doctrine which transcend fundamental teachings of the faith. While discerning of spirits is a gift of the spirit, discernment is the result of consistent fellowship with the Holy Spirit, study of the scriptures and practical application of the word of God. Thus, through illumination, practice, and experience, the senses of the mature believer are trained to accurately distinguish good doctrine from error without struggle. To forestall the emergence and spread of false teaching, and easy drift of some believers into doctrinal error, every Christian must aspire to this level of discernment in handling the word of God and doctrine.

BE MINDFUL OF INTERPRETERS OF DREAMS AND VISIONS

Main Text: Deuteronomy 13:1-5

Memory Verse: *'I cannot do it', Joseph replied to Pharaoh, 'but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires'* (NIV). – Gen 41:16

Introduction

The world sees dreams and visions as out of the normal physical experiences. They are products of our sub-consciousness and spirituality. For the Christian, they are means by which God communicates revelations, word of wisdom and word of knowledge to us. However, Satan uses counterfeit dreams and visions as well as their interpretations to mislead people just as he pretends to be an angel of light. False teachers build doctrines on dreams and visions and develop schemes of interpretation to outwit people. In our lesson today we will look at the place of dreams and visions and how to handle them in the light of scripture.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the main intention of false interpretation of dreams and visions? Verse 2, 5.
2. How are we to respond to interpretation of dreams and visions? Verse 4.
3. What is your understanding of 'You must purge the evil from among you'? Verse 5.

4. Who should we depend on for the right interpretation of dreams and visions? (Gen. 41:16).
5. How should we handle our dreams and visions in the light of God's word? (Dan. 2:18).

Conclusion

God speaks to us through dreams and visions as often as He pleases. Sometimes, these dreams and visions are clear but others require interpretation. Though people have come up with books and codes in interpreting dreams and visions, scripture is clear that the right interpretation of dreams depend on the person, situational context, and even the cultural setting. It will be erroneous to think that when one sees a cow swallowing up another cow today, it will mean exactly what it meant to king Pharaoh. Or that a golden statue will mean what it meant to king Nebuchadnezzar. Our passage today also reveals that false interpreters can predict rightly but the intent of that is only to steal the heart of people from God. When we have dreams and visions, our first approach should be to consider it in the light of the word of God and then pray instead of reading carnal meanings into them. To 'purge the evil from among us', is to desist from consulting false teachers or listening to them.

JESUS CHRIST - THE FOCUS OF ETERNITY

Main Text: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Memory Verse: *There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever (NIV).* – Rev. 22:5

Introduction

One question often asked on earth is, what happens after death? Over the centuries Humanity have made futile attempts to understand how eternity begins after life terminates here on earth. What happens to believers when they die? Do they go straight to heaven? Who are those that will resurrect if the dead in Christ are already in heaven? Where are the dead who did not accept Christ? These are just a few of the many questions people ask on heaven and earth. The Bible has not left us ignorant of that. It is, however, unfortunate that humanity with all their frailties attempt to complicate what God has made plain. Today, we will delve into processes leading to eternity and the current situation of the dead to avoid deception by false teachers.

Questions for Discussion

1. What will happen to the dead in Christ at the sound of the trumpet of God? Verse 16.
2. Where shall the dead and living in the Lord who will be caught up in the air be? Verse 17.
3. What is the current place of the dead in Christ? Verse 14.
4. What is your response towards eternity? (Luke 16:29-31).

5. Why should our minds be focused on Christ rather than the people in paradise or hell?

Conclusion

The Bible presents eternity as a timeless phenomenon - that which defies time estimation or boundaries. Eternity shall either be spent in the lake of fire or heaven. Heaven is a place of bliss where those who accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour will spend eternity with Jesus whilst the lake of fire is a place of blast and torment prepared for Satan and those who reject Christ. For those who die, they are kept in a temporary abode – a kind of departure launch. But when believers die their souls and spirit instantly go to be with Jesus (Philippians 1:23). For, the atoning death of Christ secured access to God for believers at death. They sleep as they await the trumpet's sound to rise to put on their glorified bodies and be united with the raptured living saints and the Lord in the air. The centre and focus of heaven is not the objects and images there but Christ who is the very source of the joy untold and beauty. As we await that glorious day, we should focus on Christ here instead of tales of what people have seen or heard in claims of visions and dreams of heaven. The lake of fire is prepared for Satan and his cohorts. They are to suffer punishment there with all those who reject Christ.

REVIVAL – ENGAGING THE CRISES

Text: Nehemiah 1: 4-11

Memory Verse: *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.* Nehemiah 1: 4.

Introduction

Sometimes human beings respond to crisis as a result of fear that distances one from God – fear of death, disgrace, failure, or loss of something / someone precious.

However, fear that draws one to God directs that failure to turn to God would result in grievous consequences. God-inspired sorrow and reverence set the pace for repentance, restitution, restoration, reconstruction, and reformation to reflect previous value of profitability. When Judah was completely down and nearly annihilated, almost all the Jews felt the ensuing disgrace and spiritual emptiness, but it was in the heart of Nehemiah that God found a fertile ground to sow the seed for comprehensive revival. The reason was that he made the national burden his burden.

Questions for Reflection

1. What did Nehemiah do when he heard the news about his people and Jerusalem? Verse 4.
2. Who did Nehemiah blame in his efforts to tackle the national crises? Verse 6 and 7.

3. How was Nehemiah able to pray according to the will of God? Verse 8 and 9.
4. What categories of people did Nehemiah imply prayed to God? Verse 11a.
5. How should the church prepare herself to experience a lasting revival?

Conclusion

Nehemiah sat down and wept. He was moved by the magnitude of loss and setback that Judah had experienced as a nation, and expressed the depth of sorrow emanating from the spiritual distancing Judah had suffered in her relations with God. He also expressed his emotional pain at the likelihood of Judah losing her racial, doctrinal and moral purity which defined her nationhood. Nehemiah then mourned before God for some days, assuming the disposition of a nation in need of mercy and pardon, and demonstrated in all ways that God was the only hope of Judah's survival. Nehemiah sought the face of God in repentance, fasting, and prayer. He confessed the sins of his people and his own sins, reminded God of His great promises, and sought the grace of God for favour before the king.