

LIFE GROUP LESSON

Joshua Series • Week of November 19

Introduction

Declare together the Apostles' Creed –

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day, he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there, he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (global) Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Where is Jesus? According to the apostles and early Christian church, the Lord Jesus Christ is presently seated *at the right hand of God the Father Almighty*. According to the dying words of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, this is factual: “Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God’s right hand!” (Acts 7:56). According to the Psalms and the writer of the book of Hebrews, the Lord Jesus will remain in this position of honor – the right hand of the majestic power on high, interceding on our behalf – until the Lord’s enemies are made a ‘footstool’ under his feet (Hebrews 1:13, Psalms 110:1). Knowing where Jesus is, bears great influence on how we live. Fully devoted followers have great hope as we live and journey toward a heavenly Kingdom. Further, this coming Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is evidenced *now* among ordinary persons who faithfully love, follow and serve him.

“Long ago God spoke in many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God’s own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

As we live in active preparation for citizenship in heaven, we understand from this eyewitness account, that (1) God speaks ultimately through his Son. (2) Everything is promised to the Son as an inheritance. (3) Through the Son everything is created. (4) The Son radiates God’s own glory. (5) The Son sustains everything by

his command. (6) And when the Son had cleansed us (humanity) from sin, the Son took his rightful place on the throne of heaven. Thus, we who seek to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, must first fall in worship before him. As he lifts us, we stand to serve him. Practically speaking, we serve him by putting our faith (and worship!) into action. What does the Bible say faith *is* –

“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see” (Hebrews 11:1).

Background

Our heroes of faith show us how to persevere. They chose to live by faith, for they held to the hope that *one day*, they would witness the great coronation of God’s Royal Son. Faith does not always make sense in light of present circumstances. For example, Noah built an ark, per God’s command, when rain had yet to fall upon the earth. Abraham left his home for a land that he trusted God would show him. Sarah bore a son in her old age, Isaac, through whom all nations would be blessed. Faith may make no sense in your current situation; but faith makes perfect sense in light of the coming Kingdom of Christ on earth. Living by faith means putting what we believe into action *joyfully*. We are in this journey together. Let us motivate and encourage one another as ‘the day of his return’ draws near.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25, 35-39

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

Reflection

In the book of Hebrews, we are encouraged to “hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works” (Hebrews 10:23-24). Every year at Christ Church we participate in Joshua Celebration. It is a time when we focus on Christ Church’s six-fold covenant: we each re-commit to worshipping, learning, praying, inviting, serving, and tithing. The Joshua Menu is where we put in-writing our commitment; along with our families, we roll up our sleeves and serve in a specific area of ministry. The Bible is clear, works do not ‘earn’ eternal salvation, nor do they earn the Lord’s approval. But good deeds do honor the Lord and bless others. In turn, we are blessed as we respond to God’s blessings with faith-in-action. Serving and tithing prove our faith is real. If we love God, we will tithe our income and live generously, giving of time and financial resources to help others. Jesus served. Jesus gave.

In Closing

Joshua as an old man, stood before all the tribes of Israel and recalled the many ways God had come through on his commitment to bring them into the Promised Land. Joshua knew a choice had to be made: “So fear the LORD and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD alone. But if you refuse to serve the LORD, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD’ ... So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day at Shechem, committing them to follow the decrees and regulations of the LORD” (Joshua 24:14-15,25). May it be our joy to obey the Lord through our worshipping and learning; our praying and inviting; our serving and tithing. With Christ, our Lord, we can boldly declare:

“Look, I have come... I take joy in doing your will, my God, for your instructions are written on my heart” (Psalm 40:7-8).

One Year Bible Reading For This Week:

November 19: Ezekiel 39:1-40:27, James 2:18-3:18, Psalm 118:1-18, Proverbs 28:2
November 20: Ezekiel 40:28-41:26, James 4:1-17, Psalm 118:19-29, Prov. 28:3-5
November 21: Ezekiel 42:1-43:27, James 5:1-20, Psalm 119:1-16, Proverbs 28:6-7
November 22: Ezekiel 44:1-45:12, 1 Peter 1:1-12, Psalm 119:17-32, Prov. 28:8-10
November 23: Ezekiel 45:13-46:24, 1 Peter 1:13-2:10, Ps. 119:33-48, Prov. 28:11
November 24: Ezekiel 47:1-48:35, 1 Peter 2:11-3:7, Ps. 119:49-64, Prov. 28:12-13
November 25: Daniel 1:1-2:23, 1 Peter 3:8-4:6, Psalm 119:65-80, Proverbs 28:14

JOSHUA CELEBRATION

Text: Hebrews 10:19-25, 35-39

PLAIN TRUTH

Jesus’ _____ directs our _____.

Here are our action points:

1. Live a _____ life and reject a _____ life.

2. We can leave a Me-Sized life by _____ and _____.

And what does the life of faith look like? Two regular, decisive actions that Jesus made...

- Jesus served, so pick up a servant’s towel. Jesus said, “the son of man came to serve and not be served.”
- Start trusting Jesus by unclenching your _____ by first unclenching your _____.

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