

W M U 1978 - Q3

W. M. U. PROGRAMMES

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER

1978

2-2-3

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

WRITER: Mrs. Roy Davidson, Botswana

1. Eleven programmes are included for this quarter's study. The twelfth and thirteenth programmes are to be added by each individual country participating in the Coordinated Curriculum. These may be on missions or any other subject you wish.
2. The writer included Bible Readings which we are printing with the programmes this time. We will not include them as a regular feature since our writers have not been told to prepare them.

Editor: Joan Carter

BAPTIST PUBLICATIONS HOUSE
P.O. BOX 30370
NAIROBI, KENYA

W. M. U. PROGRAMMES

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

PROGRAMMES

1. In the Beginning God - Genesis 1
2. The Good Shepherd - Psalm 23
3. The Suffering Servant - Isaiah 53
4. A Loving Father - Luke 15
5. The Way of Happiness - Matthew 5
6. How to Pray - Matthew 6
7. The Way, the Truth, the Life - John 14
8. More than Conquerors - Romans 8
9. The Peace of God - Philippians 4
10. The Way of Love - 1 Corinthians 13
11. The Great Invitation - Isaiah 55

Daily Bible Readings

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PROGRAMME ONE

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: IN THE BEGINNING - GOD

Scripture for a Devotional: 2 Corinthians 5:17

MEMORY VERSE:

"And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

Genesis 1:31

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:3

PROGRAM LEADER:

Who made the world? People have always wondered about the answer to that question. They have decided that men and women could not have done it because the world is too big and too wonderful. Someone more powerful than we are must have made the world. Since people have not always known who that someone was, they have made up stories about him. When the world was being made no one was there except God, the maker. But one day the Maker of the world, the true God, inspired man to write down the story of creation. This story of creation is written in the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis.

PART ONE: "In the Beginning"

The writer of Genesis was inspired to write, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The first verse is the most important part of Genesis. It makes it plain that the one true God is the creator of all things. The world did not come to be by chance or accident. God, by his spoken word, created the world. The word "created" means that God brought something into being out of nothing. This world belongs to God because he made it for himself. "Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

PART TWO: "And God Said"

From the very beginning God has revealed himself as a God who speaks. He speaks with authority and power. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth" (Psalm 33:6). "By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear" (Hebrews 11:3). "Let there be light," God said, "and there was light." The first thing God gave to his creation was light. This light did not come from the sun, moon, or stars, for these lights were not created until the fourth day. This light was the shining out of God's brightness. The darkness which covered the earth was lighted by the presence of God. When God comes in, the darkness goes out. The light of God will outlast the sun. "And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5).

PART THREE: "God's Good Creation"

Before God created the animals and mankind, he provided everything that would be needed by them. He formed the atmosphere around the earth which gave rain, air, and other things needed by the life he was to create, (second day). The Creator gathered the waters into seas and formed dry land, (third day). God made vegetation and trees to supply food for living creatures, (third day). God created the sun, moon, and stars to show the difference between day and night, (fourth day). As the Lord of time, he made the seasons, days, and years. When everything was fully prepared, God created living creatures who would use and enjoy all that he had made. God created animals and fowls on land and in the water he created all kinds of fish and water life, (fifth day).

PART FOUR: "God Creates Man"

Man was the goal and crown of creation. "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). Man is of highest importance because he is made in God's image. Man created in God's image means that man can think and reason, he can choose, he has moral ideals, he has responsibility, he has the ability to be unselfish and enter into loving relationship with others. But the most important meaning is that man has a spiritual nature so he can fellowship with God. "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

LEADER:

Psalm 100:3 tells us, "Know that the Lord is God! It is he that made us, and we are his, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." God made us. He knows what is best for us. May we all enter into a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done for us. May we tell God in prayer that we want to be truly his and be the sheep of his pasture.

PROGRAMME TWO

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Scripture for Devotional: John 10:27-30

MEMORY VERSE:

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

Psalm 23:1

Scripture Reading: Psalm 23

LEADER:

Ask anyone what their favorite Psalm is. They will probably answer, "the twenty-third psalm". The Holy Spirit inspired King David, who had once been a shepherd boy, to write about the eternal Shepherd who is full of love and tenderness. This same Shepherd, our Lord, guides and protects us. He can be a Shepherd because He gives His life for His sheep. "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). The love that was great enough to send our Lord to Calvary is great enough to take care of our needs now. It is great enough to see us all the way to heaven.

PART ONE: "The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not want."

David is telling us that the One who created the world is his very own Shepherd. Every need of body or mind or spirit is fully met in God. The Shepherd knows our needs and has the power to supply them. The fear of being in want drives many a person into the paths of sin. Fear of unemployment, fear of accident, fear of old age and all other fears fall away when we know that the Lord is our Shepherd. Because He loves us, we shall never want for rest, refreshment, food, forgiveness, restoration, fellowship, guidance, deliverance from fear, comfort in sorrow, victory over enemies, security in troubled hours, joy in the Lord, power for service, or a home at the end of this earthly journey. Does He leave out anything in the world that a soul can possibly need? Only in the Shepherd can these needs be met. Praise His Holy Name!

PART TWO: "Rest and Refreshment"

As the good Shepherd, He leads his sheep to the best pastures and gives them rest and refreshment. The green pastures and restful waters refresh their lives. David must have thought about that time in his own life when he had known defeat because of sin and shame. For a whole year David was in misery, with no peace of mind or heart until that day he turned and sobbed out his confession of sin and repented in prayer to the good Shepherd who loved him. Then the good Shepherd restored his soul, brought back the joy of his salvation, and made him useful again as a follower of the Lord.

What about your soul? What about mine? Does it need to be restored? Is there defeat because of unconfessed sin? Have we become discouraged because we feel we sometimes stand alone as a follower of the Lord? Let us turn to the Good Shepherd and ask for the restoration that he has supplied for us. The Good Shepherd wants to bring it now and to give it with gentleness and loving care.

PART THREE: "I Fear No Evil"

With our lives refreshed and restored, the Good Shepherd leads us in paths of righteousness. Even though these paths go through struggles, uncertainty, deep shadows, and dangerous places, the psalmist says, "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." As the Shepherd led his sheep through a dangerous mountain pass to sunlit meadows on the other side, the sheep drew close to the Shepherd. They were obedient to his command, they listened for his voice, they were trusting in their Shepherd.

David knew that as he had walked through danger, sorrow, conflict, and disappointment his Shepherd was close by his side. His Shepherd knew the way. David was sure that if the Lord was the guide, nothing else mattered. All would be well.

PART FOUR: "The Loving Heart"

David saw the Lord as a loving host who provides a table full of good food and honours his guests with perfumed oil. The host

does not entertain his guest in secret to protect himself, but entertains his guest in the presence of his enemies. The Lord as the host will protect and provide not only what we need, but an abundance -- like a cup filled to running over.

PART FIVE: "All the Days of My Life"

"Only goodness and kindness shall follow me. I shall dwell in the house of the Lord," writes David the psalmist. The Lord not only supplies our needs and gives us guidance, He protects us from our enemies and gives fellowship around His table. He also promises that there is a home for us at the end of the journey and we are invited by the Good Shepherd to spend eternity with Him. We are to be a permanent guest in God's home.

LEADER:

Would you like to know in your own heart there is a home, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, prepared and waiting for your coming? This home can be yours if you know the Good Shepherd as your Saviour. God's son gave his life for us on Calvary. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your very own Saviour, your Shepherd.

PROGRAMME THREE

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR

Scripture for Devotion: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

MEMORY VERSE:

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Isaiah 53:6

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53

LEADER:

Isaiah 53 is the "gospel" in the Old Testament. It shows that sin's penalty is suffering and death. It tells that Jesus Christ paid our penalty by suffering and dying for us and in our place. It tells that we are made right before God if we receive Jesus Christ as our Saviour. And it points to the victory over sin we may have through faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. The book of Isaiah was written several hundred years before Jesus Christ was born. The prophet was so sure of Christ being the perfect sacrifice that he writes Isaiah 53 as though it had already happened.

PART ONE: "The Servant's Life" (Isaiah 53:1-3)

The people of Isaiah's day thought the one who would deliver men out of their troubles would be a conqueror who would destroy their enemies and sent up a powerful kingdom on earth. They would not believe the report which said that the Servant of man would be a baby born of a virgin, who grew up unnoticed by man. When the Servant grew into manhood there was nothing unusual about his physical appearance that would attract people to him. He had no "halo" about his head. He was not a richly dressed warrior or hero, not a powerful statesman. When Jesus Christ told the people he was the Promised One of God, whose kingdom was not this world, he was rejected, despised, forsaken, and nailed to a cross.

PART TWO: "The Servant's Suffering" (Isaiah 53:4-6)

When the suffering of the Servant was finished, the people confessed that he was bearing the sin for sinners. If you change the plural pronoun to the singular, and use the name of Christ in the place of the pronoun "he" it will help us to understand:

4. Christ has borne my griefs and carried my sorrows.
5. Christ was wounded for my transgressions. Christ was bruised for my iniquities. Upon Christ was the chastisement that made me whole,
With Christ's stripes I am healed.
6. Like a sheep, I have gone astray; I turned and went my own way, and the Lord laid on Christ my iniquity.

PART THREE: "The Servant's Death" (Isaiah 53:7-9)

The Servant was cruelly tortured. He suffered willingly with no protest. Why did he suffer in silence? Because he knew God's purpose; he knew he was suffering for others. The Servant was quickly tried and condemned to death. No one considered that his death was due to their very own sins. Even in his death the unfair treatment continued and the hatred did not stop at the grave. He was innocent, sinless, the beloved of the Father. Jesus Christ said, "No man takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:18).

PART FOUR: "The Servant's Victory" (Isaiah 53:10-12)

"Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him" (Isaiah 53:10). God takes no pleasure in the Servant's suffering; he endures it in order to bring about his will -- to provide salvation. God's righteous servant became the sin-offering for all men. His cruel death was in God's plan for redemption. It provides salvation for all people. The eternal Servant, who suffered, was rejected, killed, and rose again, now lives and makes intercession for the sinner. Jesus won the victory over Satan, sin, and death. He gives victory to all those who believe in him.

LEADER:

"Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

Activity: Divide into two groups. One group reads the prophecy from Isaiah and the second group reads the New Testament verses.

Isaiah 53:12

Isaiah 53:7

Isaiah 53:8

Isaiah 53:5

Isaiah 53:1

Isaiah 52:15

Isaiah 53:9

Isaiah 53:7

Isaiah 53:5

Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 53:4

Isaiah 53:1

Luke 22:37

Acts 8:32

Acts 8:33

Romans 4:25

Romans 10:16

Romans 15:21

1 Peter 2:22

1 Peter 2:23

1 Peter 2:24

1 Peter 2:25

Matthew 8:17

John 12:38

PROGRAMME FOUR:

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: A LOVING FATHER

Scripture for Devotion: 1 John 3:1

MEMORY VERSE:

"I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him,

'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.'"

Luke 15:18

Scripture Reading: Luke 15:11-32

LEADER:

Jesus often used stories to explain a heavenly truth. The story of the "Lost Son" is the story of God's love. God will not be satisfied until everything has been done to warn the lost, to seek for the lost, to find the lost, and to bring them to himself through Jesus Christ.

PART ONE: A Beautiful Home

A father had two sons. They lived together in a beautiful home with plenty of food to eat. The younger son was tired of his home and wanted to be free of the authority of his father. He asked his father for his part of the inheritance so he could go his own way. The money was to have been divided between the two sons after the father's death. The father must have wanted his son near. He must have been sad knowing the trouble that would come to his younger son. But the father did not force his will upon his son. He gave him the amount due to the second born son.

PART TWO: The Far Country

The younger son travelled far from his father. Now he could live as he wanted. In the far country, there was no one to tell him that what he was doing was wrong. He had never had so

much money or so many friends. Soon his money was all gone and his friends left him. There was a famine in the country. The son was soon so hungry that he had to go to work feeding pigs. The Jews believed that pigs were unclean animals and they were not to have anything to do with them. However, the son was so hungry he was willing to eat the same food he was feeding to the pigs.

PART THREE: The Repentant Son

While the young son was feeding the pigs he began to think about how good everything had been at his home. He had a father who loved him. There was plenty of good food and servants to help. He realized that it would be better to be a servant in his father's house than to die of hunger in a pig's pen. He saw how he had sinned against his father and against heaven. He decided to go home to his father and ask for forgiveness. He would ask to be just a hired servant doing daily work.

PART FOUR: The Loving Father

As the young son travelled home, he thought about what he would tell his father. His heart was filled with shame. He was not worthy to be called a son any longer. He would ask his father to just make him a servant. When the boy left home he was saying, "give me". Now he was saying "make me". But the son never had the opportunity to ask to be made a servant. The loving father had been waiting for him all the time. The father ran and welcomed him home with outstretched arms. He ordered a robe and shoes to be brought to his son and a feast to be prepared. He placed the family ring on his son's finger saying, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:24). The father's heart was full of joy. God is like that. He forgives and restores fellowship to everyone who will return to him.

PART FIVE: The Older Son

The older son came in from working in his father's gardens. He has heard the music and saw the preparation being made for an honoured guest. Then he heard that his brother had returned and the feast was for the younger brother. The father was happy! The younger son was happy! The entire household was happy. Envy, jealousy, and selfishness filled the older son's heart and he would not even go into the house. The loving father went out and begged the older son to come in and join the feast. The older son refused. He was not at all happy that his brother had come home. The older son complained that nothing had ever been done for him and that he had kept his father's commandments. The father reminds the older son of his full heirship. He reminds the older son of his family relationship by changing "this son of yours" to "this brother of yours" (Luke 15:30,32). The story ends with the older brother outside the father's house because he refused to share his father's love.

LEADER:

God is like the loving father in the story. God is so willing to forgive and restore. The angels in heaven rejoice over the sinner's salvation. God loves those who are disobedient like the younger son. He also loves those who are self-righteous and unloving like the older son.

Let us ask ourselves this question: Are we really happy when we see "lost" people brought into God's family? God's love is for all. Let us ask God to lead us to the lost ones and help us do our part to show them the way home.

PROGRAMME FIVE

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE WAY OF HAPPINESS

Scripture for Devotion: Psalm 1

MEMORY VERSE:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:3

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

LEADER:

In the "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus taught that Christians can know true happiness. This happiness does not depend upon what you can do or what you get, but upon what you are in Jesus Christ. The poor in spirit, those who are sorrowful, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for God's righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are willing to suffer for Christ's sake -- these are happy in Christ's kingdom.

PART ONE: The Poor in Spirit and They That Mourn. (Matthew 5:3-4)

Many of Jesus' listeners were poor physically. But Jesus was teaching that happiness belongs to those who know their spiritual need. They know they are poor spiritually and completely depend upon God who will supply their every need. God will give them the kingdom of heaven.

Happiness belongs to those who are sorrowful for their sins. These will be comforted and given power to be victorious over sin. "A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise!" (Psalm 51:17).

PART TWO: The Meek and They That Hunger and Thirst After Righteousness (Matthew 5:5-6).

The meek are those who yield to the reign of Jesus, the King, and love the laws of his Kingdom. Meekness towards our fellowman

means gentleness, consideration, and courtesy. The meek do not "grab up" the earth, they inherit it.

Happy are those who have a strong desire like hunger or thirst to be right before God. We usually go after what we really want. If we have an "appetite for righteousness," if we have a spiritual hunger, God will give us the desire of our heart. We shall be completely satisfied.

PART THREE: The Merciful and the Pure in Heart (Matthew 5:7-8)

The merciful person is happy as he remembers that God's mercy was offered to him on Calvary's Cross. He knows the joy of being forgiven. The merciful man is forgiving towards others. The good Samaritan is a good example of a merciful man. Even though the Samaritans had been mistreated by the Jews, the good Samaritan stopped his travel to care for a Jew who had been robbed and beaten.

Happy are those whose hearts are pure before God. A pure heart makes possible a pure life. We cannot come into the presence of a Holy God if our heart and life are not pure. If we are to see God our thinking, talking, and living must be pure.

PART FOUR: The Peacemakers and Those Persecuted for Righteousness Sake (Matthew 5:9-10)

Peacemakers are called the children of God because what they are doing is like what God does. God has always been the greatest peacemaker. Since man first sinned, God has tried to bring him back into a right relationship with himself. Peacemakers desire to see men at peace with God and with each other.

Blessed are those who are willing to suffer for the sake of Christ and His righteousness. The ungodly do not want the light of God to shine on their deeds. They do not want righteousness to change their social, cultural, economic, or moral ways. Jesus promises the kingdom of heaven to those who will get hurt in trying to make known His Kingdom here on earth.

PART FIVE: Those Reviled Falsely for the King's Sake. (Matthew 5:11-12)

Blessed are those who can rejoice when they are reviled and persecuted and lied about because they are the followers of Jesus Christ. If we so suffer for Christ's sake we are listed with the prophets of old, the disciples who "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41), and the early Christians who were "afflicted, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

LEADER:

Following Christ always brings rewards. The poor in spirit receive the Kingdom of Heaven. Those who mourn receive comfort. The hungry are filled. The merciful obtain mercy. The pure in heart see God. The peacemakers are called the sons of God. Those who are persecuted receive a reward in Heaven.

Those who are a part of the kingdom of God are happy here on earth and they look to a greater happiness in the world to come.

PROGRAMME SIX

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: HOW TO PRAY

Scripture for Devotion: Luke 18:10-14

MEMORY VERSE:

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

Matthew 6:9

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:5-13

LEADER:

The "Lord's Prayer" is an example or a pattern Jesus gave to help us to pray. Jesus warned us against being "as the hypocrites are" (Matthew 6:5) and putting on an act of praying to be seen of men. He taught that repeating the same words over and over is babbling and not prayer. God knows what our needs are. We do not pray to inform God of our needs. We pray that we may have fellowship with God and express our dependence upon Him.

PART ONE: "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name"
(Matthew 6:9)

The Father to whom we pray is the Creator, the God in Heaven, the Eternal, the Great "I Am." We do not come to God because we are worthy or because our good works are outstanding. We come to God in prayer because He is our Father and we are his children.

Our Father lives in heaven. He is not limited to the things of this earth or by the things of today. He sees what is best for us in all the years that lie ahead. He is a Father who has all power and is ready to move heaven and earth to "work things together for good to them that love Him and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

In Biblical days a person's name represented his character. God's name is Holy because He is holy. As we pray "Hallowed be thy name" we are praying that God will show his holiness of character, his holiness of purpose and his holy will; and that we will yield our hearts to Him in praise.

PART TWO: "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven" (Matthew 6:10)

When we pray these words we are asking that the rule of God be made in our own hearts, in our homes, in our towns and villages, in governments, and in the world. We are asking God to rule over all!

Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you" (Luke 6:46). In heaven God's will is done perfectly. No sin or disobedience mars the peace and glory there. The believers in Christ's kingdom are to live in such a way as to bring as much of heaven to this earth as possible. This prayer is not only a promise that we will seek to do God's will, but also that we will joyously accept God's will for our lives when it may not be our own will. Like Jesus we may say "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Matthew 26:39).

PART THREE: Praying for Personal Needs (Matthew 6:11-13).

"Give us this day our daily bread." Bread represents food and other basic needs in our life. It is right for us to ask God to provide all that we need because this shows we are depending upon Him. If He sends the rain and makes the sun to shine, and gives us strength to work and knowledge to do a good job, He has provided our daily bread.

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." To forgive means to take away, to wipe off, to dismiss. God does all of this when he forgives our sins. The debt is paid. It is no longer charged against us. We pray that God will forgive us as we have forgiven those who have wronged us. To forgive is to forget, to act as if some word had never been spoken, or some deed had never been done. It means that we will not seek revenge but we will welcome a restored relationship. We forgive because we are the "forgiven ones."

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."
We have asked God to forgive our failures, our mistakes, and our sins. Knowing our own weakness and the world of sin we live in, we ask God for His strength that we may not yield or give in to temptation. We are taught to pray for deliverance from the evil one (Satan). For the Kingdom of God, the power and the glory belong forever to Our Heavenly Father.

LEADER:

With heads bowed and hearts turned to God in prayer may we softly and slowly repeat the Lord's Prayer thinking about all the Holy Spirit has taught us today.

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen."

PROGRAMME SEVEN

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Scripture for Devotion: Matthew 25:31-36

MEMORY VERSE:

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

John 14:6

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-15

LEADER:

Jesus wanted his disciples to know that in a few days evil men would try to destroy Him, but that God would bring glory to himself and life to others by the Son's death. Jesus taught his disciples that in the difficult days ahead that there was only one thing to do -- to hold on to their trust in God and their trust in him as Saviour.

PART ONE: "Believe in God, Believe Also in Me" (John 14:1).

Jesus had spoken of his death many times. Now His death was shortly to occur. He wanted to make sure his disciples were prepared for it. He did not want them to have a troubled heart. Jesus asked his disciples to trust in him just as they had been trusting God, for only this would bring comfort and courage at his death. We can trust Jesus and rest on his wisdom, his work, his word, and his return. Jesus is the proof that God is willing to give us everything He has to give.

PART TWO: "I will come again" (John 14:2-4).

The disciples were disturbed when Jesus told them that he was going away (John 13:31-38). They wanted to know where Jesus was going. Jesus told them that he was going from earth to his Father's house. He said, "In my Father's house there are many rooms" (John 14:2). This tells us that in Heaven there is room

for everyone. Jesus told his disciples that He would go ahead of them and make the preparation so that when they came they would be at home with him. "If I go . . . I will come again." Jesus is coming again! Just as he came to this earth the first time and the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest," Jesus is coming again. The first coming was as the baby Saviour. The second coming is as ruling King of Kings. (1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Matthew 25:31).

PART THREE: "The Way, the Truth, the Life" (John 14:4-11)

Thomas confessed that they did not know where Jesus was going or the way. Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The Jews knew they must walk in the "ways of God" (Psalm 27:11). They wanted to know the truth (Psalm 119:30). They wanted a life worth living. Jesus is the way to the Father. Jesus is the way to his Father's house. Jesus is truth about God that sets men free. (John 8:32). Jesus is the life of the Father (John 6:32-35).

Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. "He who has seen me has seen the Father," Jesus answered (John 14:9). To see Jesus is to see God. God stepped into human form in Jesus Christ and came to this world as a man. He was not ashamed to do a man's work. He knew what it was to be tempted, to be hungry, to be tired, to be rejected, and to suffer. Jesus' words were God's voice speaking to men. His deeds were God's power flowing through him to men. Jesus asked his disciples to believe in him.

PART FOUR: "Whatever You Ask" (John 14:12-14)

Jesus offered two great promises to his disciples. Jesus said that one day his disciples would do what he did, and even greater. Christ in us means that we can call upon the same resources of God that Jesus had. The only reason we are not

being used by God in a great and mighty way is because we do not believe and depend upon Christ.

The second promise is that any request, offered in Jesus' name, which will bring glory to the Father through the Son, will be granted. The limit to that for which we can ask is "anything." Our motive in asking must be to bring glory to God. It is because of who Jesus Christ is, that we ask in Jesus' name, believing that He will do it.

LEADER:

We live in difficult times, our hearts are often troubled. Let us remember that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is everything. He wants to live in us and make us victorious Christians whose lives will bring honour to the Father.

PROGRAMME EIGHT

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Scripture for Devotion: 1 John 3:1-2

MEMORY VERSE:

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

Romans 8:37

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:28-39

LEADER:

Chapter 8 of Romans contains many wonderful truths that should fill our hearts with praise. The closing verses of this great chapter remind us that God is in control of this world, working to make us Christ-like. There is no one or no event that can separate us from the love of God in Christ.

PART ONE: "The Purpose of God" (Romans 8:28-30)

Paul, the apostle, says, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). A merciful, generous God overrules all of life. He can turn sickness, hardships, troubles, persecution, and sorrow into a means of blessing for those who keep on loving him, for those who want His purposes carried out in their lives. We cannot always see that what is happening will work out for our good. We must trust a loving God; we must walk by faith. This truth should lift us above worry, complaining, fear, and doubt.

God chose us for salvation before this world was created (Romans 8:29). His purpose was that we should grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. The more a Christian thinks about his experience the more he realizes that it did not come from himself--it is all from God. Jesus Christ came into this world; He lived; He went to the cross; He rose again. We did

nothing to bring that about; that was God's work. We heard the story of this wondrous love. We did not make the story; we only received the story.

PART TWO: "God is for Us" (Romans 8:31-32)

"If God is for us, who is against us" (Romans 8:31). Since God is for us, it does not make any difference who is against us. There is no power anywhere that is as great as the strength of God. The world, the flesh, and the devil may come against us, but they can never succeed when God is on our side.

God made clear the truth that He loves us and is for us. He did not hold back his own Son but gave him up to us all. God was willing to go that far in his love for us, "Will He not with him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). If God gave his only Son to die on a cruel cross for sinners, will he not give us all lesser gifts to help us be like Christ.

PART THREE: "We Have Been Justified" (Romans 8:33-34)

The Christian has been made right with God by his faith in Jesus Christ. He has received forgiveness for sin. God, our Judge, has declared us not guilty. Who would dare accuse us? We are the ones God has chosen for his own. God has forgiven us and given us right standing with himself. "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:12

Who then will condemn us? Only Jesus has won the right to do that. And He will not condemn us, for He is the One who died for us and came back to life again. Right now Jesus is sitting in the place of highest honour next to God pleading for us in heaven.

PART FOUR: "Nothing Can Separate us from the Love of Christ"

(Romans 8:35-39)

Paul asks the question, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35). He then calls the list of harsh trials,

many of which he had been through: tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword. These do not separate us from Christ's love. They may separate us from wealth and health, from family and friends, from comfort and ease. But they do not touch the unchangeable love of Christ.

Quoting from Psalm 44:22, Paul says these trials are like slow torture. It seems that we are being killed all day long, that we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But such suffering does not mean that God's love has changed or that anything has separated us from it. We keep on living in His love, we are more than conquerors.

Neither life nor death can separate us from Christ's love. In life we live with Christ; in death we die with Him; and because we die in Him, we shall also rise with Him. Death is only a step leading into the presence of Christ. Nothing in God's creation, no other creature, no power whatsoever, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

LEADER:

God's love is eternal. It is constant and unchangeable. It is sufficient and triumphant. God in Christ loves us no matter what happens to us. His love is always working in every experience so that all that happens to us is working for our good and fitting into his plans. We are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

PROGRAMME NINE

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE PEACE OF GOD

Scripture for Devotion: John 14:27-29

MEMORY VERSE:

"My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:19

Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:4-9, 12-13, 19-20.

LEADER:

Paul was a prisoner of the Roman government when he wrote the book of Philippians. It was written to a church he loved very much in Philippi. Paul had suffered greatly because he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had been mobbed, beaten, stoned, and thrown into prison many times. While Paul was in Jerusalem taking an offering to poor suffering Christians he was mobbed and would have been killed if a Roman officer had not stopped the mob and carried Paul off to prison. While he was being transferred from prison in Jerusalem to Rome, the ship on which he was travelling was wrecked in a storm. At the time of his writing Philippians, Paul had been waiting two years for his trial. He was chained by the wrist to a Roman guard. Yet, his letter is full of love and rejoicing.

PART ONE: "Rejoice in the Lord Always" (Philippians 4:4-8).

What did Paul have that would cause him to say, "Rejoice in the Lord"? He was a poor man. He had given up everything to follow Christ--his wealth, his job as an officer for the Chief Priest, his rights as a citizen and the comforts of home. He counted everything he had as being like garbage when compared to the worth of knowing Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:7-9). He had been so ill that he almost died. He had been shipwrecked. And now was a prisoner chained to a Roman guard. But we find

Paul rejoicing and giving thanks that being in prison has given him opportunity to proclaim the gospel, reaching especially the Praetorian guard, and that other Christians had been challenged to be more bold in speaking the word of God.

What is Paul's secret of joy and peace? Paul was a man of vision. That vision had carried him to Corinth, Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, and many other towns and villages preaching the gospel of Christ. And now, that vision even through prison bars, showed him the whole world as Christ's. "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice."

PART TWO: "The Peace of God" (Philippians 4:6-7)

Paul teaches us that the answer to all our hardships and worries is believing prayer. Take all your fears, all your problems, all your worries to the Lord in prayer, "with thanksgiving." Pray thankfully, Paul advises, not anxiously. Do not wonder how long it will take God to do all that you are asking him to do. But, for the privilege of going to the very throne of God in prayer, be thankful.

"And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Living a life of believing prayer will fill our hearts and minds with the peace of God. God's kind of peace is beyond our understanding. It is like a soldier guarding the gate of our life, making sure that nothing enters which can disturb our confidence and rest, our peace of heart and mind in Jesus Christ.

PART THREE: "Think on These Things" (Philippians 4:8-9)

Our thoughts can rob us of the peace of heart and mind that Jesus gives. If we continue to keep thinking about past mistakes and failures which have been confessed and forgiven by our Heavenly Father, our peace will slip away. If an ugly thought of lust and passion comes into our mind, and we hold it there to

think upon it, our peace will not remain. If someone wrongs us and we talk of it to others and keep thinking about it ourselves, our resentment will chase away our peace.

Paul tells the people at Philippi to think about whatever is honourable, just, pure, lovely, and gracious. We should think about things for which we can praise God. The Philippians had watched Paul as he worked, served, thought, and taught. They knew he was ruled by the spirit of Christ. Paul had earned the right to say to them as well as to us, "What you have learned and received and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). Paul was a great example of a man who knew peace and contentment regardless of his outward situation because his life rested in Jesus Christ.

PART FOUR: "I Can Do All Things in Christ"(Philippians 4:12-13, 19)

Paul knew he could meet all of life's demands in any circumstance through Christ who provided the strength. Although Paul was a well-educated man, he did not depend upon his own wisdom. Paul was not a wonder-worker or a spiritual "strong man." He was a man dependent upon Christ for everything. Paul knew that apart from Christ, he could do nothing (John 15:5). But in Christ he could do all things through the One who strengthened him (Philippians 4:13).

Many times our churches call upon their members to teach a Sunday School class, lead a women's group, conduct a prayer meeting, or serve in some area of church life. Some of us are guilty of saying, "I can't, I don't know how, or I am afraid." If we are in Christ, we can do all things through Him who strengthens us. God's blessings are not in short supply. His storehouse stays full and running over. Our God is rich, he is the owner of everything. God will not disappoint us in the full supply of whatever we need. By our union with Christ by faith we are linked to the source and supply of all true wealth. Paul

closes his letter to the Philippians by saying, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Glory and Praise to His Name!

LEADER:

May we spend a few minutes in meditation. Christ is the difference between defeat and rejoicing, between need and abundance, between disturbance and peace, between weakness and power, between want and contentment. God became Man, becoming poor that we might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

PROGRAMME TEN

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE WAY OF LOVE

Scripture for Devotion: 1 John 2:7-11

MEMORY VERSE:

"So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

1 Corinthians 13:13

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13

LEADER:

Paul wrote the church of Corinth to help them deal with some of the problems in their fellowship. In chapter 12, Paul deals with spiritual gifts. Some members who had received certain spiritual gifts had become proud and boastful. Members who did not have these gifts were covetous and quarrelsome. Paul wanted them to understand that their gifts, though they were different, were all from God. He wanted his friends to know that any gift is of no value unless love goes with it. Our gifts are to be exercised always under the control of love. Chapter 13 presents to the Church at Corinth a "more excellent way"--the way of love (1 Corinthians 12:31).

PART ONE: "Without Love, We are Nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

If we made a list of all the spiritual gifts we would like to have and all the services we would like to perform for God and our fellowman what would it include? Paul tells us that if love cannot be found in every gift and every service, the total value of everything we do is zero.

- (1) The best speech of earth or heaven, without love, is but a noise.
- (2) Insight into God's plans for His people is useless without love.

- (3) Great understanding and knowledge without love adds up to "nothing".
- (4) A miracle working faith, the special gift of the Spirit, is worthless without love.
- (5) A life of devotion which feeds the hungry, clothes the poor, even to the point of offering the body to be burned or sold into slavery; without love it is a failure.

Love is the one thing needed. Nothing can make up for the lack of it. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

PART TWO: "What Love Does" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

1. "Love is patient." It understands and waits. Under suffering, misfortune, trials, and trouble, love does not force an issue, or call for a showdown.

2. "Love is kind." Jesus went about doing good. He gave more goodness and kindness into this world than all "organizations put together." We should be usefully kind, helpful and caring. The kindness that comes from Christian love is action, not just word, but deed.

3. "Love rejoices in the right." It is glad for the day-by-day victories in the Christian life. It is happy when people choose for the right.

4. "Love bears all things." Love covers, protects, and guards another. Love will not drag out into the light of day the faults and mistakes of others.

5. "Love believes all things." It has complete trust in the heavenly Father. It believes the best about one's fellowman.

6. "Love hopes all things." It never gives up. It carries a person through difficult times.

7. "Love endures all things." Love carries on in sunshine or rain. It is immovable. It makes us willing to "remain under the load" until the end of the journey is reached. Love is no quitter.

PART THREE: "What Love does Not Do" (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

1. "Love is not jealous or boastful." Love does not envy what another has or does. It does not call attention to itself. It does not brag.

2. "Love is not arrogant or rude." It is not haughty or selfish. It is not proud and puffed up like a peacock.

3. "Love does not insist on its own way." It does not seek privileges or best interest, or opportunities for getting ahead of others. Love gives itself freely that others might live.

4. "Love is not irritable or resentful." It does not go around looking for an argument. Love does not lose its temper. It is not touchy and sensitive. Love does not hold on to unforgiveness.

5. "Love does not rejoice in wrong." It is not glad when things go wrong for others or when men fail. Love does not enjoy sin or moral breakdown.

PART FOUR: "Love Never Ends" (1 Corinthians 13:8-13)

Love does not perish. No end can ever come to love. It never falls to the ground in defeat. It never fails to complete its purpose. All other wonderful gifts will one day accomplish that for which they were given and will pass away.

Our understanding is so small now even with our many gifts. We think as a child thinks. It is like looking into a poor mirror; everything is blurred. But one day God will open our understanding. We will be mature in Him. We will see clearly. There are three things that will remain and reach into eternity.

These are faith, hope, and love. They will never become useless or needless. They will abide forever. The greatest of these three is love.

LEADER:

In what ways do we show our love for Christ and others? Do our friends and neighbors and family feel the love of Christ coming to them through us. Too often we are complaining, resentful, jealous, and irritated with other people. The love of Christ does not shine through the gloom of our life. Our Christian testimony adds up to zero without love. May we all open our lives to the love of God in Christ so that it will overflow to others. For God is love.

PROGRAMME ELEVEN

THEME FOR THE QUARTER: GREAT PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Theme for Today: THE GREAT INVITATION

Scripture for Devotion: Matthew 11:28-30

MEMORY VERSE:

"Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near."

Isaiah 55:6

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55:1-3, 6-9

LEADER:

Isaiah 55 is speaking to the Jews living in Babylon for many years. They had been taken to Babylon as the spoils of war. Now they had become merchants and traders in exile. They had forgotten that God had called them to be priests. Instead of being witnesses for Jehovah God, they were enjoying pagan living. They were spending their lives as worldly traders seeking to get rather than to give. It is to the people of Isaiah's day as well as to us that God gives his great invitation.

PART ONE: "Come, for all Things are now Ready" (Isaiah 55:1).

The invitation is sent out to those who are thirsty and hungry. It is for all people whose hearts sense the need and desire to have fellowship with God. We are "spiritually" poor. God's wonderful provision cannot be traded or bought. It cannot be had for money or merit. It cannot be earned or deserved. What God offers is a free gift, it is God himself. We must simply come to him and receive what he has for us.

What God has for us is satisfying. It is offered in plenty. Wine, milk, bread, and fatness are words used as symbols of the richness of life with God. They represent the abundance of the blessings given those who come into God's kingdom.

PART TWO: Bread that does not Satisfy (Isaiah 55:2-3)

Those who search for something to meet their soul's need are pictured as spending money for bread that will not satisfy. Many people bow before idols and false gods now, as they did in Isaiah's day, trying to find satisfaction. Many search for pleasure, power, position, or popularity to satisfy their soul.

But we need not forever thirst and not be satisfied, or forever be hungry and not be fed. "Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear that your soul may live," pleads the Lord through his prophet (Isaiah 55:2-3). Many years later Jesus said, "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

PART THREE: "Seek the Lord while He may be Found" (Isaiah 55:6-9).

A part of God's great invitation is the offer of forgiveness. The Lord God is near, he may be found, but we must seek him and call upon him while we still have the opportunity. The day for pardon may pass before we finally make up our mind to seek God.

The way to seek the Lord is made clear. The wicked man is to forsake his evil way, the unrighteous man his thoughts, and "return unto the Lord" (Isaiah 55:7). Many people have fooled themselves into thinking that as long as their beliefs are right, it matters little what kind of life they live. But a complete turning away from our way of thinking and doing and a turning toward God is necessary. When we do this, God will have mercy on us and abundantly pardon. This forgiveness is free to the buyer, but it cost the seller plenty. We must not forget that Isaiah 55 comes after Isaiah 53, and that a cross stands in the center of God's plan.

LEADER:

Nothing the world can offer will be enough to give satisfaction, not money, pleasure, fame, power, or culture. When we have taken part in all the delights of this world, there is still something deep inside us that says, "I hunger. I thirst." Why not accept the invitation to the royal feast which the king has prepared. For Now the banquet is spread. Now God is near. Now is his wonderful salvation available. Now he is ready and anxious to forgive. TODAY redemption is waiting to be received. TOMORROW may be too late.

DAILY BIBLE READING

In the Beginning God

1. Genesis 1:1-13
2. Genesis 1:13-26
3. Genesis 1:26-2:3
4. Psalm 100
5. John 1:1-4
6. Colossians 1:15-20
7. Jeremiah 10:12-13, 27:4-5

The Good Shepherd

1. Psalm 23
2. John 10:1-6
3. John 10:7-15
4. John 10:27-30
5. Psalm 3:1-6
6. Psalm 27:1-6
7. Psalm 84:1-4, 10-12

The Suffering Servant

1. Isaiah 53:1-6
2. Isaiah 53:6-12
3. Philippians 2:5-11
4. Acts 3:26-35
5. Acts 8:35-40
6. 1 Peter 2:21-25
7. Romans 8:31-34

A Loving Father

1. Luke 15:1-7
2. Luke 15:8-10
3. Luke 15:11-24

4. Luke 15:25-32
5. 1 John 3:1-3
6. John 3:16-21
7. Romans 10:1-13

The Way of Happiness

1. Matthew 5:1-12
2. Matthew 5:13-20
3. Matthew 5:21-30
4. Matthew 5:31-42
5. Matthew 5:43-48
6. Acts 5:40-42
7. 2 Timothy 2:11-15

How to Pray

1. Matthew 6:1-4
2. Matthew 6:5-13
3. Matthew 6:14-21
4. Matthew 6:22-27
5. Matthew 6:28-34
6. Luke 18:1-8
7. Luke 18:9-14

The Way, the Truth, the Life

1. John 14:1-7
2. John 14:8-11
3. John 14:12-17
4. John 14:18-24
5. John 14:25-31
6. Matthew 25:31-36
7. John 6:32-40

More than Conquerors

1. Romans 8:1-8
2. Romans 8:9-17
3. Romans 8:18-26
4. Romans 8:26-39
5. 2 Peter 4:4-6, Romans 8:32
6. Romans 10:8-13
7. Romans 10:14-17

The Peace of God

1. Philippians 1:2-11
2. Philippians 1:12-18
3. Philippians 1:18-24
4. Philippians 2:5-11
5. Philippians 4:1-7
6. Philippians 4:8-14
7. Philippians 4:15-21

The Way of Love

1. 1 Corinthians 12:1-8
2. 1 Corinthians 12:9-13
3. 1 Corinthians 12:14-26
4. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31
5. 1 Corinthians 13:1-7
6. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13
7. 1 John 2:7-11

The Great Invitation

1. Isaiah 55:1-5
2. Isaiah 55:6-11
3. Isaiah 55:12-13
4. Matthew 11:28-30
5. Revelation 1:5-8
6. Revelation 22:1-7
7. Revelation 22:12-17