



Week 1 Study Sheet

I Trust Jesus for Hope

Introduction

If you took the world's major religions and did a comparison you may be surprised to see that most religions share many of the same characteristics. Many religions share belief in good and evil. Many have a sacred text that contains the core values of the religion. Some believe in the afterlife. Most religions have teachers or prophets who serve as charismatic leaders to propel awareness about the religion.

Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, the three largest monotheistic religions, share the belief that certain Old Testament text are the sacred words of God. They agree on the importance of the Old Testament prophets along with key aspects on the rule of life.

So, what separates Christianity from other religions? The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the one belief of Christianity that is not shared by any other major religion. No other religion makes the radical claim that God become incarnate, lived a humble life as a man, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died, and was buried, descended into Hell for three days, then was resurrected on the third day to sit at the right hand of God until he returns to judge the living and dead at the final judgment.¹

The significance of the resurrection of Jesus is not simply that Jesus came back to life. The power of the resurrection of Jesus is that God himself corrected the sins of the garden through the obedient act of his only begotten son, so that sin could no longer deal the final blow of death to those who come into relationship with God through his son Jesus. Now, because of the resurrection of Jesus we can now join Jesus in his father's house and encounter an eternal hope that is not shared with any other religion. This is what separates Christianity - the resurrection of Jesus.

Meditate and Pray

The risen Christ meets us at the tomb and turns our tears to joy. For your love and goodness, we give you thanks, O God. Christ comes through our locked doors and turns our fear to courage. For your love and goodness, we give you thanks, O God. Christ comes to daily life and work and turns our failure to new vision. For your love and goodness, we give you thanks, O God. Christ breaks the bread and turns our despair to hope. For your love and goodness, we give thanks, O God. (Bosco Peters, New Zealand)

Read

[Acts 23:1-10](#)

Discuss

- What is happening in this passage? Where is Paul? Who are the key people?
- Why would Paul claim to be on trial because of the resurrection?
- Why would Paul's claim divide the council?
- What examples from this passage help us understand the importance of the resurrection?
- How have you felt when you have been on trial because of the resurrection?

¹See *Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed*.



Week 1 Study Sheet Cont.

I Trust Jesus for Hope

Read [1 Corinthians 15:50-58](#)

- Discuss**
- What key phrases stand out in this passage?
 - How does Paul describe resurrection?
 - Why do we need resurrection?
 - How does resurrection conquer death? Why is that important?
 - How does this passage encourage our faith?

Practice

The sacrament of Baptism connects us with the resurrection of Jesus. Paul teaches, “For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.” (Romans 6:5-7 NIV)

When we descend into the water through baptism, it symbolizes death to our old way of life and death to our old community. When we rise, we are raised into a new way of life, a new community of believers who spend their life in apprenticeship to Jesus. It is a public event that testifies to our acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus along with the confession of our sins. It reveals to the world that we are a new creation, dead to the old way of life, submitted to the guiding of the Holy Spirit until we meet Jesus either through death or rapture into our resurrected state.

Consider your baptism experience. If you are following Jesus but have not been baptized, consider taking this next step in your discipleship walk. Learn more and sign up to be baptized at oakhills.church/baptism.



Week 2 Study Sheet

I Trust Jesus for Purpose

Introduction

Gospel is an interesting word. It often comes to our ears in reference to the work and life of Jesus. We weave in complex paradigms to try and explain its meaning. But, in its simplest understanding it means, “good news.” This good news is directly connected to the resurrection. It is because of the resurrection of Jesus that we have good news. Jesus has conquered death and sin and extended grace to whom so ever would believe. With this good news we also now have purpose connected to the hope we have in Jesus.

This purpose becomes merged between our life lived now and the life that Jesus prototyped for us to live. The Gospels give us an example of how to live life with purpose. Jesus taught his disciples, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45 NIV)

The good news was not meant to simply save us from wrath in the end but to empower us to serve others so that they may not have to face God’s wrath at the end. We live a servant life as Jesus did to help others experience what the kingdom of God is like now as it is in heaven. What are great examples of Jesus serving others? What are some great examples of others serving you?

Meditate and Pray

O Lord, grant me to greet the coming day in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon thy holy will. In every hour of the day reveal thy will to me. Bless my dealing with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the day with peace of soul, and with firm conviction that thy will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that all are sent by thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering and embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all that it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray thou thyself in me. Amen. (Philaret of Moscow, Russia/1782-1867)

Read

[Matthew 20:20-28](#)

Discuss

- Who are the key people in this passage?
- What is the main topic of the passage?
- How does Jesus address the question?
- How does this help us understand our purpose?
- How do we live a life of purpose different from the world?



Week 2 Study Sheet Cont.

I Trust Jesus for Purpose

Read [John 13:1-17](#)

- Discuss**
- When does this take place? Who is present?
 - What are they doing in this passage?
 - What is Jesus teaching his disciples?
 - What is Jesus teaching us through his disciples?
 - How can you live a life of purpose by serving others?

Practice Baptism reveals to the world that we are made new in Christ Jesus. If you are following Jesus but have not been baptized, consider taking this next step in your discipleship walk. Learn more and sign up to be baptized at oakhills.church/baptism.

Like baptism, foot washing is a sacramental experience that reminds us of the holiness and humility of Jesus. His act of washing the feet of his disciples demonstrated not only servanthood, but also his authority to take away sin. Because Jesus set us free from sin, we willingly serve others to point them to the redeeming work of Jesus. This is the hope of Jesus, the Gospel. Take time this week to practice holiness and humility with others. As you serve them, remember that it's not only an act of humility and kindness, but also a way to bring God's Kingdom into everyday life.



Week 3 Study Sheet

I Trust Jesus for Freedom

Introduction

Amber always wanted to be a police officer. She trained hard and worked hard to receive her rank. Yet with all her training, in a real-life situation, one night she mistakenly fired her weapon. She shot, and a man died. The guilt and regret from this moment will never bring him back. Her accident will haunt her and his (Botham) family forever.

Amber went to trial and faced justice for this moment. She was found guilty and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Brandt, Botham's brother, took the stand. One would think that in a situation like this, all the family wanted was vengeance. Tooth for tooth, life for life.

Instead of badgering and condemning Amber, Brandt extended Amber grace and forgiveness. He forgave her! What a freeing moment for both the family of Botham and Amber. They will have to live with her mistake for the rest of their lives, but they don't have to live with guilt, anger, and regret.²

This is true freedom. This is the same freedom that Jesus extends to us. That while we were still sinners, Jesus chose to die for us (Romans 5:8). Jesus knows our guilt. He knows our failures, but he still chooses us. It is his desire for us to live free of guilt and shame. How has Jesus set you free? How have you experienced freedom in Jesus?

Meditate and Pray

The law of Christ, which it is our duty to fulfill, is the bearing of the cross...Thus the call to follow Christ always means a call to share the work of forgiving men their sins. Forgiveness is the Christlike suffering which it is the Christian's duty to bear. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Germany/1906-1945)

Read

[John 21:15-19](#)

Discuss

- Who is present in this story, where are they, and what are they doing?
- What words or phrases capture your attention as you read this passage?
- Why would Jesus single Peter out and what is Jesus trying to do for Peter?
- What is Jesus teaching us in this passage?

Read

[Galatians 5:1-15](#)

Discuss

- What key words and contrasting thoughts appear in this passage?
- What issues does Paul seem to be addressing?
- How does Paul's message impact the church then?
- How does Paul's message speak to us today?
- What is Jesus trying to teach us through Paul's words?

Practice

Is there someone you need to forgive this week? Is there someone you need to ask for forgiveness this week? In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to help you: Reveal Lord, anyone I may have offended or anyone who may have offended me. Remove the pain and guilt associated with the offense. Replace this guilt and regret with freedom. Help me Lord to restore the relationship.

²[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...), [Wednesday marks 5 years since Botham Jean's murder in Dallas](#)



Week 4 Study Sheet

I Trust Jesus for Peace

Introduction

The existence of pain and suffering in this world causes many to “lose faith” or search for ways to “cope.” As we try to reconcile why pain and suffering exist in this world, we can often falsely attribute them to God. This train of thought removes the blame for pain and suffering from Satan and the disobedient backs of Adam and Eve.

When sin entered the world, so did pain and suffering. Paul reminds us that even creation itself has been affected by the consequences of sin (Romans 8:19). Christianity also makes another radical claim through the resurrection: the Creator God suffered. Yes, Jesus who was wholly God also submitted in his humanity to the suffering of the world.

Jesus experienced hunger pains, he felt growing pains, he suffered bullying, and knew the pain that comes with the death of a loved one. He also endured pain and suffering through his death by Roman crucifixion. With his suffering imminent, he speaks these words to his disciples, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33 NIV)

With all he endured, he still knew peace. His peace came from knowing that his obedience would redeem our disobedience and provide hope to a fallen world. Jesus was crucified and resurrected for us, and when we acknowledge his work of suffering and obedience, we also receive his peace. How can this hope in the resurrection help us with our pain and suffering?

Meditate and Pray

O Lord, my God, grant us your peace; already, indeed, you have made us rich in all things! Give us that peace of being at rest, that Sabbath peace, the peace which knows no end. (Augustine of Hippo, Algeria/354-430)

Read

[Isaiah 53](#)

Discuss

- What are the key attributes of the LORD’S servant?
- How does this servant address pain and suffering?
- How does this passage point to Jesus?
- How can we relate to the servant?
- How does this passage help us trust God during pain and suffering?

Read

[Hebrews 4:12-16](#)

Discuss

- What key words or phrases stand out in this passage?
- How can God’s Word help us with pain and suffering?
- If nothing is hidden from God, what does God think about our pain and suffering?
- How does Jesus help us with our pain and suffering?
- How has God helped you with pain and suffering?

Practice

Life happens and situations arise that attack our peace. Pain and suffering often cause other things like anxiety to afflict us. Practice a simple prayer and breathing exercise to help in these situations. Breath in for eight seconds and out for eight seconds. As you breath in, speak the words, “The Peace of the Lord.” As you breath out, speak the words, “Be with me always.” Let the peace of the Lord rest with you.



Week 5 Study Sheet

I Trust Jesus for Life

Introduction

Not everything is meant to last forever. We are often reminded of this when our car breaks down, our refrigerator goes out, or when we face retirement. The frailty found in the things of this world can weigh our hearts down, produce anxious thoughts, and lead us into hasty decisions.

We also face people who let us down. We are left broken and insecure by failed marriages and relationships. Our hearts hurt when we experience barriers between family members or lack connections with a church body. Have you ever been let down by something that you thought would last forever? How did you feel because of the situation?

Because of the resurrection, there is something that we can be assured of. Paul states, “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NIV)

We have an eternal reward in Christ. Jesus said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21 ESV) We have an eternal reward for life found in our freedom in Jesus. How does our eternal salvation in Jesus help us every day? How does this affect our lives?

Meditate and Pray

Grant us, O Lord, not to mind earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to cleave to those that shall abide; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer)

Read

[John 6:60-71](#)

Discuss

- Who are the key figures in this passage?
- What seems to be the topic of interest?
- Take a minute to read [John 6:22-59](#), how did Jesus' teaching influence the reaction of the people?
- How do Jesus' words bring us eternal life?
- How does Peter's answer help guide us?



Week 5 Study Sheet Cont.

I Trust Jesus for Life

Read [Luke 23:39-43](#)

- Discuss**
- What are the key characteristics of the two criminals?
 - How can you relate to the criminals?
 - What is the second criminal asking for with his questions to Jesus?
 - How does Jesus' response encourage us in our walk?
 - What is Jesus' example for us and how can we share this with others?

Practice The sacrament of Baptism connects us with the resurrection of Jesus. Paul teaches, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin." (Romans 6:5-7 NIV)

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