

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 17: Called Through God's Grace

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Apostle**

Theme Scripture:

“When God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being.” --- Galatians 1:15-16

How Can We Pray for One Another?

ACTS

Although the author of this book does not name himself, evidence outside the Scriptures and inferences from the book itself lead to the conclusion that the author is Luke. (Perhaps you noticed the author switches “voice”, using “we” sometimes and in other places, “I”). Tradition accepts that Luke was a physician who was a companion of Paul on several of the missionary journeys. Acts is a historical record of the founding of the church, the spread of the gospel, the beginnings of congregations, and evangelistic efforts in the apostolic pattern.

---*NIV Study Bible*

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Leander E. Keck

What should we remember as we read Acts for a source of information about Paul?

What can we know about Paul from Acts?

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

In pairs, select one of Paul's two sermons, one to the Jews or one to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:16-43 – sermon to the Jews

Acts 17:22-31 – sermon to the Greeks

Discuss the following questions, and bring your conclusions back to the whole group:

1. What does Paul emphasize about Jesus?
2. What information is not included?
3. How does Paul use Scripture to explain Jesus?
4. What choice does he leave with people?
5. What is the tone of this sermon? Why do you think Paul used this approach?

Assign groups to study Paul's arrest and trial. Look for clues to how Paul is portrayed by Luke. Share conclusions with the whole group:

Acts 21:15-23:35

Acts 24:1-17

Acts 25:1-12

Acts 25:13-26:32

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: Acts 28:16-31

Much of Paul's time was spent ministering through letter writing and preaching from prison. At first, this would not seem to be a very effective plan on God's part. Discuss the following ideas:

1. We know God released Paul from prison when it served his plan. Why do you think God allowed Paul to be imprisoned for such long periods of time?
2. Why was Paul's message so effective?
3. Paul wanted to go to Rome for a very long time. What effect did he have even though he was under house arrest and in chains?
4. In what ways can I put Paul's life and message to work in my spiritual life?

HUMAN CONDITION

When someone comes along to challenge what we believe and what we do, we often respond by becoming more zealous for our view and ways.

One aspect of our human condition is that we don't take criticism or the hint that we just might be wrong lightly! Wars have been fought over this very thing.

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faithful community embraces its life-giving message with passion and hurries to take it to others.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In what ways can I take the Good News to others with a kind, loving heart? How can I share my belief in a non-threatening way?

CLOSING AND PRAYER

DISCIPLE 3
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Week 18: The Letters of Paul

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Correspondence**

Theme Scripture:

“For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears,
not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love I have for you.”

2 Corinthians 2:4

How Can We Pray for One Another?

LETTERS OF PAUL

It is because he left us so many letters that we feel we know Paul so well. In them, he opened his mind and heart to the folk he loved so much; and in the, to this day, we can see that great mind grappling with the problems of the early church and feel that great heart throbbing with love for men, even when they were misguided and mistaken. When we read the letters of Paul we are often in a difficulty. We do not possess the letter which he was answering; we do not fully know the circumstances with which he was dealing; it is only from the letter itself that we can deduce the situation which prompted it. Before we can hope to understand fully any letter Paul writes, we must try to reconstruct the situation which produced it. ---*Barclay's Letter to the Romans*

As we read each letter, we will look at some of the historical background and events surrounding the church Paul addresses.

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL

In pairs, contrast and compare the elements of Paul's letters: salutation, thanksgiving, body, instruction/encouragement and conclusion:

- Are you able to detect a motivation for the letter?
- On what authority does Paul base his opinions?
- If applicable, what kind of persuasion skills does Paul use?

1. **SALUTATION**

Romans 1:1-17 _____

1 Corinthians 1:1-3 _____

Galatians 1-2 _____

2. **THANKSGIVING**

Romans 1:8-15 _____

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 _____

Galatians 1:6-7 _____

3. **BODY**

1 Corinthians 3:1-23 _____

4. **ENCOURAGEMENT (EXHORTATION)**

Philippians 4:2-9 _____

1 Thessalonians 4:1-6 _____

5. **CONCLUSION**

Romans 15:23-26 ; 16:1-16 _____

Philippians 4:7-9; 21-23 _____

ENCOUNTER THE WORD

PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

- In what ways does Paul include both information and feelings in this passage?
- Evaluate Paul's relationship with the church at Philippi from this passage

HUMAN CONDITION

We need connections. We do not survive well when isolated or out of touch with others. Any word received lets us know that someone knows we are here.

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faithful community reaches out in love to invite, support, counsel, and persuade.

We reach out with prayer, with words of support, encouragement, and thanksgiving.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE:

- Have I encountered a time when I could have counseled, supported, persuaded another person for Christ? _____
- What did I do? _____
- What could I have done? _____

CLOSING PRAYER

DISCIPLE 3
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Week 19: The Lord is Coming

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Encourage**

Theme Scripture:

“For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descent from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”
1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

How Can We Pray for One Another?

The Letters to the Thessalonians

Although he was there only a short time, Paul created a great stir in Thessalonica. His enemies accused him of turning “the world upside down.” A large number of Greeks and prominent women believed (Acts 17:4-6). It was talked about all over Greece. Driven out of Thessalonica, Paul went to Berea, about 50 miles to the west. But soon he was also driven from Berea and went to Athens, 300 miles south. In Athens, Paul was filled with anxiety about the young church in Thessalonica and immediately sent Timothy back for information. Because of the Thessalonians’ confusion about Christian concepts, Paul wrote to instruct them about his own conduct, about the second coming of Christ and relationship issues.

---From *Halley’s Bible Handbook*

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Victor Paul Furnish

What new understanding did Paul bring to the “day of the Lord” because of his belief in Jesus as Messiah? What Jewish expectations provide background for Paul’s discussion of the return of Christ?

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Look at Poster dating Paul’s letters. Look at geography of Paul’s journey (Second Journey). As we study the Scriptures, in groups discuss the following issues addressed by Paul in his letter. Then share your ideas with the whole group:

1. **Questions about the Second Coming: 1 Thessalonians 4:11 – 5:8**
People had stopped working and abandoned ordinary pursuits in anticipation of Christ's coming. They worried about those who had died. What is Paul's explanation to the Thessalonians who were confused about this issue?

2. **Tendency to despise all lawful authority: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-16**
We remember that the Greek culture was philosophical and argumentative in the areas of ideas, concepts. How does Paul address this issue?

3. **Ever present danger of relapse into immorality: 1 Thessalonians 3-8**
The heathen world engaged in sexual activities which were related to pagan worship. It was hard to *unlearn* this point of view. What is Paul's instruction?

4. **Paul's defense of his apostleship; factions: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12**
Differences of understanding about issues can be very divisive in groups such as churches. It appears Paul's credentials had been questioned. How does Paul respond to these two issues?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-18

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4: In what sense have sexuality and sex become false gods in our society?
How can we encourage sexual purity in our Christian fellowship?

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 What is Paul's advice for living a life that honors God?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Discuss the idea of the "Coming of Christ." What does this mean to you?

HUMAN CONDITION

We lack a context of hope in which to place our daily lives. We see only dead ends. We long to be encouraged at home, at work, even at church. Can anything make a difference?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faithful community lives in perpetual readiness for the Lord's coming.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: What specific ideas can help me avoid a lack of hope in my daily life and encourage me to live in perpetual readiness for the Lord's coming?

*Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ.
1 Thessalonians 5:16*

CLOSING AND PRAYER

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Week 20: Honest Labor

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Work**

Theme Scripture:

*“You yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone’s bread without paying for it but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you.
----2 Thessalonians 3:7-8*

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Victor Paul Furnish

What was the response of the early Christians when Christ did not return as they had expected? How do we live in the meantime?

2 Thessalonians and Acts 17:1-15

Paul’s first venture into Thessalonica was to go to a Jewish synagogue, as was his custom. Some Jews listened and became believers, but some were jealous and formed a mob from “bad characters” in the market place. Eventually, Paul was run out of town and left Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. Paul was so anxious to hear how the new believers were faring, that he sent Timothy back to gather news. The second letter to the Thessalonians must have been written not long after the first letter – perhaps about six months. Paul found the situation in the Thessalonian church was not changed substantially.

*--Barclay’s **The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, NIV Study Bible***

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Look at Poster dating Paul’s letters. Look at geography of Paul’s journey (Second Journey). Conduct a round table discussion of this letter.

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5: Paul realized that judicious praise can do what indiscriminate criticism cannot do. Often praise fills the person and gives the desire to do better. What three attributes does Paul praise? How might we use Paul’s approach of praise for others in our own lives?

2 Thessalonians 2:1-6 Read Revelation 13:5-7. Paul speaks of “The Man of Lawlessness.” Speculate on who this person or organization is. A recently raised leader? The conquering Roman Empire? The Evil One?

In verses 5-6, what does Paul assure the Thessalonians? What do we need to remember when we see death, destruction, lawlessness, immorality, impureness in our world today?

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 Paul brings in the idea of “election.” This includes several understandings:

Being God’s “Chosen People”. *“To God’s elect.....who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and the sprinkling of his blood.” (1 Peter 1:1-2) Israel was called; so is the Christian community. What does this mean to in our world today?*

Loved by God. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son.....” (John 3:16) God’s has “elected” us by his love. What feelings does this idea evoke in you?*

Predestined to be His. *“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart” (Jeremiah 1:5). What does this mean to me as an individual?*

Adopted. *“In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” (Ephesians 1:5) Discuss what this idea means to you and how you understand the concept of “being elected” .*

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

Paul gives a warning against idleness. The Greek words in the translation are *ataktos* and *ataktein* which means *to play truant*.

- What is Paul’s defense to quell the idea he and his follows were playing truant while they were in Thessalonica?
- How do we separate those who are idle and those who are in need of help?
- What is Paul’s position on “busybodies” ? Define “busybody.”

HUMAN CONDITION

Because we allow society to tell us what work is valuable and what is not, we miss the real issue---whether we are using the time God gives us productively.

A typical get acquainted question is, "What do you do?" (emphasis on what is your *career*?) How do you answer? What do you feel?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community honors the worker and understands work as graced with a sense of urgency.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In what ways am I using my life and work in a productive way for God?

*But the Lord is faithful and he will strengthen
and protect you from the evil one.
2 Thessalonians 3:3*

CLOSING AND PRAYER

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Week 21: Seeing the Good

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Rejoice**

Theme Scripture:

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!” Philippians 4:4

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: William Mallard

In a brief hymn-story, Philippians presents Christ’s divinity and humanity. Listen for the meaning in Christ’s emptying himself for us.

PHILIPPIANS

Philippians has been accepted as an authentic letter of Paul. Philippi, because of nearby gold and silver mines, was a great commercial center of the ancient world. In Acts 16:11-38, we learn of Paul’s arrival in Philippi with Silas and Timothy. They went to the area where Jews gathered on the Sabbath and began to preach. This is the city where Paul healed the slave girl possessed of demons. As a result, Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. As they were praying and singing hymns, an earthquake shook the prison and the doors flew open. When their jailer discovered they had not escaped, he and his whole family listen to Paul’s message, believed and were baptized. Eventually, Paul had to flee the city because of the riots. Paul wrote to his new church from prison, probably in Rome when he was under house arrest. His primary purpose was to thank them for their gift, to report his circumstances, to encourage them to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances.

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

As we read through the following passages, try to picture Paul, in chains in his Roman house, writing to this new struggling church. Walk in Paul’s shoes for the next hour as we read his letter of joy, encouragement, and contentment:

Chapter 1:3-7 What joy do you hear? From what source does Paul find this joy?

Verses 12-14 Why does Paul take this viewpoint about his situation?

Verses 18-19 What can we learn from Paul’s response to his position?

Verses 27-30 What can we learn from Paul’s advice?

Chapter 2:3-4 How does this practice contribute to Christian unity? Have you

experienced a time when people think riches are reward for virtue and poverty equals sinfulness?

Verses 14-17

How is being discontented an expression of unbelief which prevents doing what pleases God? Paul uses the analogy of “running a race” – why?

Chapter 3: 4-7

Paul warns the Philippians. How does this warning apply to us today?

Verses 12-14

How does Paul follow his own advice in chapter 2:3-4? Why do you think he would make this statement?

Chapter 4: 4-7

Rejoice! Why would one say this when under arrest, chained, facing execution, away from all friends and supporters? What does this say to us?

Verses 8-9

Why does Paul feel this way of thinking is important. What would Paul say to our culture today?

Verses 10-13

How does this show Paul has been “poured out like a drink offering?” What lesson can we take from this scripture for our own lives? (see 2:17)

ENCOUNTER THE WORD:

HUMAN CONDITION

We have difficulty in seeing good in all situations. We feel no honor in suffering. And as for putting others ahead of ourselves, let them go first. When something good happens, then we’ll say thanks. Until then, we prefer reality.

HOW does suffering provide occasions for God’s transforming power to work?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community sees all experiences and situations as occasions for God’s transforming power to work.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: Do I remember to stop and look for the “*Joy*” Paul speaks of when times are bad? Why not? How can I focus on *Joy* in my life more consistently?

CLOSING AND PRAYER

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Week 22: The Body of Christ

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Unity**

Theme Scripture:

“Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:27

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Justo L. Gonzalez

Why do we base our belief in the life after death on the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

What did you hear about the present body and the future body?

CORINTH

Using the map of Paul’s Second Journey, locate Corinth in the southern part of Greece. You can see by its geographical position, it was inevitably one of the greatest trading commercial centers of the ancient world: north to south traffic of Greece had no alternative but to pass through her and a greater part of the east to west trade of the Mediterranean world chose the route through Corinth. But, Corinth was also a byword for evil living: the Greek word, *korinthiasesthai*, “to life like a Corinthian, had become part of the Greek language which meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery. The population was very mixed: Roman veterans from the time of Julius Caesar, merchants from other places, Jews from the scattering of the Exile, Phoenicians (masters of the sea), philosophers, sailors, freedmen, slaves, and hucksters of every form of vice. It was a city without aristocracy, without traditions and without well-established citizens. Twelve temples dedicated to pagan gods were scattered throughout the city. The grandest temple was that of Aphrodite, Goddess of Love, which had 1,000 sacred prostitutes. This was the background in which Paul preached the message of Christ.

---*Barclay’s The Letters to the Corinthians*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Paul had many lessons about daily living and relationships to teach the Corinthians. In groups of 2-3 examine the following passages and discuss the questions. Be sure to use your Bible commentaries. Be prepared to share your ideas with the whole group.

1. **Sexual Immorality – 1 Corinthians 5:1-8; 11-12; 6:9-11**
 - Why is one case of sexual immorality a problem in the church?
 - What distinction does Paul make between church members and those of the world regarding this issue? Why?

- Read Chapter 6:9-11: What does Paul have to say about the sins he lists in this passage. Is there a hierarchy – some are greater; some are lesser? Who is more guilty than the other?

2. Marriage – 1 Corinthians 7:1-16

- Evaluate Paul’s instruction for marriage: what are husbands’ and wives’ responsibility to each other? What does he say about the partnership when one spouse is not a believer?
- In verse 16, what interesting thought does Paul offer to the believer regarding the unbelieving spouse? What do you think?

3. Stumbling Blocks – 1 Corinthians 8:4-13

- What was the problem with meat sacrificed to idols?
- What is Paul’s advice? How might we use this advice in our world today?

4. Spiritual Gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 12-19

- Paul says he does not want us to be ignorant about spiritual gifts....what are spiritual gifts? Why are they important?
- In verses 12-19, why does Paul use the body to represent how spiritual gifts are to work? Why is each gift equally important?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: 1 Corinthians 13 - Love

For many this chapter, the Hymn of Love, is the most wonderful chapter in the whole New Testament. The Greek language had several words that are translated “love” in English:

Eros - sensual love; erotic love

Phileo – to have ardent affection and feeling, “brotherly” love

Agape – unconditional love, but a love of the will rather than emotion. Concern for the well-being of others and willingness to try to make conditions better. *Agape* is the foundation of Christian love.

Paul teaches *agape* love in this passage. In verses 4-8, how does Paul describe this love?

In verses 9-12, what does Paul have to say about our present knowledge of heavenly things?

Read verse 13 aloud. Why does Paul make this distinction?

HUMAN CONDITION

We all bring with us our own ideas, interests, loyalties, and backgrounds, and our human inclinations to seek our own advantage, hold on to our rights, and see ourselves as self-made. Can we come together?

Identify the parts of this statement that are reinforced by our culture.

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faith community seeks unity amid diversity for the sake of the gospel.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In 1 Corinthians 15:9, Paul states, “*For I am the least of the apostles, and do not deserve to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect...I worked harder...but the grace of God was with me.*”

In what ways has God’s grace been at work in my life? _____

In what ways can I call myself a disciple (follower) of Christ? _____

CLOSING AND PRAYER

*Now it is required that those who have been given
a trust must prove faithful.
1 Corinthians 4:2*

DISCIPLE 3
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Week 23: Crisis in Confidence

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Pain**

Theme Scripture:

“I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.”

2 Corinthians 12:20

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Susan R. Garrett

What does Paul teach about sin and death as causes of suffering? What is the relationship between our suffering and our being conformed to the image of Christ?

CORINTH

Last week, we learned of the immoral situation in Corinth which faced Paul and the new Christians. Scholars believe there may have been 4 letters to the Corinthians: the 1st letter was 1 Corinthians; the 2nd may have been lost; the 3rd was a “severe” letter found in 2 Corinthians 10-13 and the 4th a letter of “reconciliation” found in 2 Corinthians 1-9. Paul’s writings to the Corinthians tells us more about him as a person than any other part of the scripture. Paul also has to defend his integrity against the false prophets or “super apostles” who were dividing the church through factions, deceiving the new Christians, and questioning Paul’s integrity. Paul argues his defense in Chapters 10-13, then outlines the characteristics of Christian ministry in Chapters 1-9.

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

The “severe” letter – Chapters 10-13: Paul tells us more about himself than he does in any other writing. In pairs, make a list of ideas which answer one or more of these questions:

- What do you see in the writing that shows the real Paul?
- How does he defend his integrity?
- What are examples of his courage and humility? His weaknesses and strength?
- Where do you see Paul struggling to overcome his own suffering?

1. **2 Corinthians 10:1-18** Defense of his ministry

2. **2 Corinthians 11:1-15** The false apostles

3. **2 Corinthians 11:16-33** Paul's sufferings

4. **2 Corinthians 6:4-10; 12:7-10** Paul's struggles, the "thorn in his side"

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: 2 Corinthians 1-9: "Letter of Reconciliation"

Again, in pairs, look at the following Scriptures and make a list of answers to one or more of the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of Christian Ministry?
- In what ways does Paul encourage generosity to others?
- What are the "treasures in jars of clay"?

1. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 Forgiveness
2. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 Let your light shine
3. 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 Jars of Clay
4. 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 New creations in Christ
5. 2 Corinthians 8:2-8 Generosity

HUMAN CONDITION

We misunderstand or are misunderstood. It hurts. So we become defensive and withdraw trust. That's painful, too.

We retreat. We avoid. We dodge the issue. As Christians, what is our charge?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faith community knows that it bears the gospel in weakness and counts on the power of God to overcome that weakness.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: What characteristics do I see in Paul that I would like to see in myself? What must I do to attain these in my life? _____

CLOSING AND PRAYER

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Cor. 4:18

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Week 24: God's Saving Righteousness

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Faith**

Theme Scripture:

“I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith...For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’”

--Romans 1:16-17

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Richard B. Hays

In his dealing with Scripture, why did Paul have to keep both Jews and Gentiles in mind? What five perspectives does Paul bring to reading Scripture?

ROME

A very great difference between the Letter to the Romans and his other letters is that Paul was writing to a Church with whose founding he had had nothing whatever to do and no personal contact at all. Rome was the greatest city in the world, the capital of the greatest Empire the world had ever seen. Paul had never been there, and he did not know if he ever would visit. Therefore, he wished to send to the church a sort of systematic explanation of his own theological position. He wanted them to have the true word of Christian doctrine, a powerful and effective defense. He felt the best protection against the infection of false teaching was the antiseptic of the truth.

----Barclay's *The Letter to the Romans*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Using notes from daily reading and the information from the Study Manual, explore the following concepts which Paul discusses in his letter:

The Wrath

Romans 1:18- 20 Who is ungodly? Has The Law failed? Why or why not?

Romans 2:25, 28-29 What is “circumcision of the heart” ? Why does Paul declare this is more important than the outward sign?

Romans 2:1, 3 Paul puts Jews and Gentiles in the same sinking boat. Why?

Romans 3:10-12 *Who* is righteous?

- Romans 2:6-8, 11 Paul declares there is a universality of sin. What is the answer or hope?
- Romans 3:1-2 **What**, then, is the advantage of being a Jew? With what has the Jewish nation been entrusted? What are they to do?
- Romans 5:3b-5, 8 “Because we know that suffering.....” Why does Paul believe the Christian life is difficult? How can we respond to the idea that suffering may be necessary?
- Romans 6:23 Is the promise worth it?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: Read Romans 3:21-26

Justification: Paul uses a metaphor from the law courts. If an innocent man appears before a judge, to treat him as an innocent man is to *acquit* him. When we appear before God, we are utterly guilty. Yet God, in his amazing mercy, treats us as if we are innocent. That’s *justification!*

Grace: God’s favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it. We are utterly guilty and deserve to pay the ultimate price, yet God blots out our sin when we believe. That’s *grace!*

Sanctification: Through God’s grace, we are separated from sin and become dedicated to God’s righteousness. We are set apart from the world and for God’s service. That’s *sanctification!*

Therefore, we are guilty of sin; God makes us innocent by *justification*; through God’s *grace* we receive undeserved kindness; we are set apart from the sin of the world and for God’s service by becoming *sanctified*.

The Romans Road to Salvation

Romans 3:10-12

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8

Romans 10:9

Romans 10:13

HUMAN CONDITION

We let go of our guilt with great difficulty. Somehow guilt allows us to think we're in control and that eventually we'll be good enough to be free of it. The risk of letting go is scary.

Why do we feel we must always be in control?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faith community, by faith claims the experience of being made right with God and invites others to claim it.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In what ways do I have opportunities to share my faith with others and invite them to come with me along the *Romans Road to Salvation*?

CLOSING AND PRAYER: Silent Prayer

- Tell God why he is important in your life (Adoration)
- Tell God what you have not done very well lately (Confession)
- Thank God for what he has done in your life recently (Thanksgiving)
- Ask God for any needs you have (Supplication)

Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.
Romans 4:8

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Week 25: Salvation for All

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Grace**

Theme Scripture:

“There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’” --Romans 10:12-13

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Leander E. Keck

How does Paul describe the human condition and God’s answer to it?

ROMANS

When Paul actually wrote the *Letter to the Romans*, the date was sometime in the year A.D. 58, and he was in Corinth. He was just about to bring to its completion a scheme very dear to his heart. The Church at Jerusalem was the mother Church of them all, but it was poor, and Paul had organized a collection throughout the younger churches for it. This collection offer two things: an opportunity for the younger converts to put Christian charity into action and a practical way of impressing on all Christians the unity of the Christian Church. They were not members of isolated and independent congregations, but one great Church. When Paul wrote this letter, he was just about to set out with that gift for the Jerusalem Church.

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Look for the thread of the salvation message running through these scriptures. We will use excerpts from Eugene Peterson’s *The Message* to enhance our understanding of Paul’s teaching in Romans 7 – 11:

Group 1: Romans 8:3-4; 12-17

The Law

You might ask, “If the law code was bad, it’s no better than sin itself!” The law code had a perfectly legitimate function. Without its guidelines for right and wrong, moral behavior would be mostly guesswork. God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son....the law always ended up being used as a Band-Aid on sin instead of a deep healing of it.We don’t owe this old do-it-yourself life one red cent....though we go through hard times with Christ and we’re certainly going to go through the good times with him!

Question: How does this passage show God’s promises will not fail?

Group 2: Romans 8:18-31

Creation Groans

That's why I don't think there's any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. God's spirit is right alongside helping us along. The Israelite identity was never racially determined by sexual transmission, but it was God-determined by promise. Remember the promise to Sarah? [Genesis 18:14]

Question: How does this passage show God's word does not change?

Group 3: Romans 9:19-21; 30-32

Salvation for All

You ask, "How can God blame us for anything since he's in charge of everything?" Do we know enough to call God into question? Clay doesn't talk back to the fingers that mold it. Israel, who seemed so interested in reading and talking about what God was doing, missed it. How could they miss it? Because, instead of trusting God, they took over.

Question: How does this passage show that God is free to act?

Group 4: Romans 10:1-13

Salvation for All

Believe me, friends all I want for Israel is what's best for Israel: salvation. After all these years of refusing to really deal with God on his terms, insisting on making their own deals, they have nothing to show for it. Salvation: you don't "do" anything, you simply call out to God trusting him to do it for you. Why didn't Israel understand that she had no corner on this message?

Question: How does this passage show that God does not require a legalistic approach to salvation?

Group 5: Romans 11:1-12

Salvation for All

Does this mean that God is so fed up with Israel that he'll have nothing more to do with them? Hardly. I, the one writing these things, am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham out of the tribe of Benjamin. You can't get much more Semitic than that! When Israel tried to be right with God on her own, ...she didn't succeed. Are they down for the count? And the answer is a clear-cut no. When they walked out, they left the door open and the outsiders walked in.

Question: How does this passage show that God does not save people because of who they are?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: ROMANS 11:17-24

God is Merciful

It's you the outsiders that I'm concerned with now because my personal assignment is focused on the so-called outsiders. Israel's falling out initiated this worldwide coming together; their recovery is going to set off something even better: mass homecoming! It's certainly possible to say, "Other branches were pruned so that I could be grafted in!" The only reason you're on the tree is because your graft "took" when you believed...so don't get cocky and strut your branch! And don't get to feeling superior to those pruned branches down on the ground. They could very well get grafted back in. God can do that. Just be glad you're in the tree and hope for the best for the others.

Questions:

Who were the branches that were pruned? (Jeremiah 11:16)

Explain the metaphor used by Paul that "wild olives" that were grafted in? (in horticulture, it is the good olive that is grafted onto the stock of the wild olive so that a fruit-bearing olive may result. The wild root stock is more hardy and disease-free than the new stock)

What did this passage likely mean to its first hearers?

HUMAN CONDITION

We're pulled in two directions. We desire to do right, but our actions undercut us. We intend only good but end up doing harm. We make up our mind, but we can't follow through. We long to feel whole.

In what ways does this statement resonate with you?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community acknowledges that God is free to be God and to work out God's purposes as God determines.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: Does God have a purpose in my life? In what ways do I feel nudged, called, compelled to be drawn into serving?

CLOSING AND PRAYER: Ask members of the class to read verses 1-2 of the following Psalms: Psalm 7, Psalm 9, Psalm 15, Psalm 21.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord --- Romans 8:2

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. ---Romans 10:13

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 26: New Life in Christ

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Therefore**

Theme Scripture:

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”
--Romans 12:1

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Thomas E. Boomershine

Describe Paul’s use of the language of sacrifice and transformation to teach a new way of thinking and acting. How do we make our lives living sacrifices? What are the purpose and characteristics of the new mind?

ROMANS

Although Paul didn’t know the church at Rome since he had never been there, his dream was to go to Rome and set up a western base which would sponsor his travel to Spain and to the Gentiles, his mission for spreading the Gospel. At that time, greatness was ablaze with many Spaniards who were writing their names in Roman history through literature, poetry, oratory, and philosophy. What if men like this could be touched for Christ? As far as we know, Paul never went to Spain; he was arrested in Jerusalem, sent to prison in Rome and there he was martyred.

---Barclay’s *The Letter to the Romans*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Paul poses practical questions which deal with life and living. In pairs, look at the following passages and discuss Paul’s teaching. Be prepared to share your ideas with the whole class. You might want to use your Bible commentaries and notes from daily reading.

Living Sacrifices; One Body, Many Members	Romans 12:1-8
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1. To the Greek, only the spirit mattered; to the Christian, the body was the temple of the Holy Spirit and the instrument through which the Holy Spirit works. What did Paul mean by “living sacrifices”?

2. In verses 6-8, Paul discusses the gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophesy (speaking God’s message); [practical] service; teaching, exhortation (encouragement), generosity, leadership, compassion and mercy. What does Paul stress about use of these gifts? To what does Paul compare the function of these gifts and why?

Love	Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 5:3-12
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1. The word Paul uses for “love” is *philostorgos* and *storge*. The Greek *phileo* means “brother” while *storge* means “family love.” Refer to Matthew 5:3-12, Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Explain Paul’s teaching using these translated meanings of our English word “love”.

Stumbling Blocks	Romans 14:1-14; 21
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1. There were some Christians who believed in Christian liberty; the old taboos were gone, old food laws were not relevant, no need for observance of special days. On the other hand, there were those who clung to the old rituals; eating of meat, rigid observance of the Sabbath. We see this diverse spectrum of faith in churches today: liberal vs. orthodox. What does Paul’s teach about this diversity within the church?

Mark of Fellowship	Romans 14:22-15:13
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1. In every sphere of Christian life, one must examine things, not only as they affect him/her but as they affect *other people*. What does Paul say about relationships with fellow Christians?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: The Christian and The State

Romans 13:1-7

1. What do you find surprising in this passage: *Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Honor the emperor.*
2. Zealots (“dagger bearers”) were fanatical nationalists who used terrorist tactics on Roman government and wreaked havoc on those Jews who paid the required tribute to Rome. Give reasons why a man cannot entirely disassociate himself from the society in which he lives and has a part? What benefits does one enjoy as a part of a society?
3. Paul viewed the Roman Empire as a divinely ordained instrument to save the world from chaos. Why ??
4. What can we take from this teaching about our relationship with the government of our nation?

HUMAN CONDITION

Freedom is in the air. So limits are passé. Rules are old-fashioned. Restrictions are uncomfortable. It's a competitive world, and we're on our own.

In today's world, what rules seem old-fashioned? Which restrictions do you rebel against?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community opens itself to the Holy Spirit's working freely in its midst.

In order to hear to the Holy Spirit, we must take time out to *listen*. Setting aside time for prayer, meditation, and Scripture reading are times the Spirit can stir within our heart. We learn to listen to nudgings, leadings, tuggings of what God has in mind for us.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In what ways do I set aside time in my life to listen for the Holy Spirit's leading in my life?

CLOSING AND PRAYER:

Lord, I thank you for all you are doing at my church and for the way my life has been forever changed. Father, I recognize that I have only just begun to see what you have in store for your church. As we look to the future, I commit as a faithful disciple to ask for your direction and guidance. Help me to see your vision and to seek your full potential for me. Teach me what you want me to do. Grant me the courage and the will to pursue your will for your church, as I desire to bring honor and glory to your name. Amen.

*Accept one another then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
--Romans 15:7*

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 27: Fruit of the Holy Spirit

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Grow**

Theme Scripture:

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity,
faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.”

----Galatians 5:22-23

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Beverly Roberts Gaventa

What new insights did you gain into Paul and how he viewed his ministry? What does it mean to you to find Paul using language about mothers and children?

GALATIANS

Paul writes this letter to the new church to address several issues. Paul’s apostleship has been attacked. To be an apostle a man must have accompanied Jesus during his earthly life and have witnessed his Resurrection. Although Paul did not fulfill this qualification, he asserts that his experience on the Road to Damascus qualified him. Jews within the church who had accepted Christianity believed that God’s promises were for Jews alone. Thus these “Judaizers” were making life difficult for the Gentiles. Importance was given to keeping the Law: if a Gentile wished to become a Christian, let him become a Jew first. Paul brings a message of salvation through grace not works.

---*Barclay’s Letter to the Galatians*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Paul uses some harsh language in this letter, calling the Galatians “foolish” and asking “who has bewitched you?” In groups, work through the Scriptures to determine points for Paul’s arguments for those who would destroy the Christian faith:

Paul’s Credentials	Galatians 1:11-24; 2:8
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1. Make a list of the reasons Paul gave the Galatians to defend his position as an Apostle. In what ways are you convinced by Paul’s argument?

Arguments Against the Judaizers**Galatians 3:1-14**

1. How does Paul develop his argument that the Law is not the way to Salvation after the Cross?

(Whole group discussion, read **Galatians 3:19-22** and discuss the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the Law?
- Can a man get into a right relationship with God via the Law?

Christian Freedom**Galatians 5:1-15**

1. Paul has been theological up to this point; now he becomes intensely ethical. To him, theology has no purpose unless it is lived out. What does Paul say about grace versus works? What does Paul say about relationships within the body of Christ?

Ethics of Being a Christian**Galatians 6:1-10**

1. Ethics in today's world are questionable. What does Paul say about relationships within the church and with others?

(Whole group discussion:

- In our own culture, what could take away our spiritual freedom and lead us back to restrictive legalism?
- Which is a greater danger to our church today: legalism or lack of moral restraint?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD:**FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – GALATIANS 5:19-23**

- **Love** – The New Testament word for love is *agape* – no matter what a man may do to us by way of insult or injury or humiliation, we will never seek anything else but his highest good.
- **Joy** - Greek word *chara*; not joy that comes from earthly things but joy whose foundation is God.

- **Peace** - Greek word *eirene* or the Hebrew *shalom* means not just freedom from trouble but is everything that makes for a man's highest good.
- **Patience** – If God had been a man, he would have wiped out this world long ago, but he has the patience which bears with all our sinning and will not cast us off. We must reproduce this forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude of God towards one another.
- **Kindness and Goodness** – closely connected words. The whole idea is a goodness which is kind. The Christian needs goodness which at one and the same times can be kind and strong.'
- **Faithfulness** – *trustworthiness*; a characteristic of the man who is reliable
- **Gentleness** - *praotes* is the most untranslatable of words. It can mean being submissive to the will of God; being teachable; being considerate. It is the ability of a man who is always angry at the right time and never at the wrong time.
- **Self-control** – *egkrateia* or self-mastery. It is a virtue which make a man so master of himself that he is fit to be the servant of others.

---Barclay's Letter to the Galatians

1. Which of the Fruit of the Spirit do you wish to grow in your life?

HUMAN CONDITION

We long for a presence, a power, or a purpose in our lives that will bring peace and commitment. We try so hard, but joy escapes us.

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community, renewed in mind and transformed in purpose, offers itself daily in joyful service to others – a fragrant sacrifice of obedience to Christ.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE:

Heavenly Father, I have read Paul's words in the Scripture today. From this day, I ask you to help me in my journey toward developing _____

Fruit of the Spirit

in my life and in my relationships with others. Keep me accountable for this promise.

AMEN

CLOSING AND PRAYER

*I call on you, O God, for you will answer me;
Give ear to me and hear my prayer.*

--Psalm 17:6

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 28: Christ Above All

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **New Life**

Theme Scripture:

“Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God
Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you
have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:1-3

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Will Coleman

What is your understanding of Jesus Christ as supreme authority in the church and in the universe? How do you understand the idea that God’s redemption is for all creation?

COLOSSIANS

When Paul wrote Colossians, he was not writing in a vacuum. He was writing to meet a very definite situation. A group of false teachers were spreading a philosophy in the early church called Gnosticism. Its devotees were Gnostics, or *the intellectual ones*. These men dissatisfied with what they considered the rude simplicity of Christianity, wished to turn it into a philosophy and to align it with other philosophies of the time. They held that matter was eternal and that it was out of evil matter that the world was created. The true God could not touch matter and, therefore, could not himself be the agent of creation. The world was not God’s world but that of a power hostile to him; Jesus Christ was by no means unique and Gnostics completely denied the manhood of Jesus. In their own writings, they said that when Jesus walked, he left no footprints on the ground. Special knowledge and special passwords were needed to attain communion with God. Salvation was *intellectual* knowledge and was not for every man but only for the intellectual.

*---Barclay’s Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and
Thessalonians*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

The Supremacy of Christ	Colossians 1:15-23
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- List Paul’s elements in his argument for Christ’s supremacy

- How does his argument refute the Gnostics’ philosophical beliefs?

Freedom from Human Regulations**Colossians 2:6-23**

- How does Paul give power to *all* in this knowledge of Christ?
- What does Paul say about observance of human regulations? (v. 17-19)
- Remember the lesson from Galatians about the Judaizers' requirement for Gentiles to become a Jew first, then a Christian? How does Paul answer this parallel problem with the Colossians in verses 20-23?

Rules for Christian Households**Colossians 3:18-4:6**

- When Paul writes about the roles with the Christian household, he uses the Greek *kephale* (*pronounced kef-ah-LAY*). The word does mean "head" but is also used to mean "foremost" in terms of position as in the cornerstone or foundation. It was never used to mean "leader" or "boss" or "chief". A *kephale* was one who went before the troops, the leader in the sense of being in the lead, the first one into battle. (*What Paul Really Said About Women* by John Temple Bristow)
- What is Paul's designation of the role of the husband, wife and children of the household?
- Why do you think Paul encouraged slaves to obey their earthly masters?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

Becoming a Christian means the "death" of our old life and the "putting on" of a new life. Hence, Paul sets out some rules. This list may seem daunting. How can we hope to achieve these goals in our lives? What are we to do?

- v. 1-3 *...set your hearts on things above....not on earthly things.....*
- v. 5-8 *...put to death...sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry...rid yourselves of ...anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other....*
- v. 12-13 *.....clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other, and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*
- v. 17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

HUMAN CONDITION

We are fascinated by the zodiac signs and new age ideas, biorhythms and crystals, generic spirituality. We want to know how our lives are ordered, whether this is a good day or not. There must be secret wisdom out there to guide us.

Is there a “secret wisdom”?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community, spiritually centered in Christ the wisdom of God, gives first place to Christ in all things.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE:

How important is Jesus in my life? _____

In my old life, what has “died”? _____

In my new life, what have I “put on”? _____

CLOSING AND PRAYER

Lord God of all eternity,

You are so faithful, true and unchanging. In contrast, my life seems to shift with every tick of the clock. Time flies with such fury that I am always working deadline to deadline, and dashing from appointment to appointment. Lord, help me to slow down and focus on you. For when I turn to you, all my chaos and busyness slips into serenity. What there is much work to accomplish, much good work, I so desire to toil in unison with you where there is no time; only light, beauty and order. May I seek your will and work to glorify you in all things. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As you come to him, the living Stone -- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him -- you also, like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:4-5

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 29: Whole Armor of God

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Stand**

Theme Scripture:

“Take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” Ephesians 6:13

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Dan P. Cole

What made Ephesus attractive as a base for missionary activity and outreach? What conditions in the Roman Empire aided Paul in spreading the gospel?

EPHESIANS

It is certain that Ephesians was written when Paul was in prison for the faith and that it has in some way the closest possible connection with Colossians. The letter was written to Gentiles. Ephesians is the most impersonal letter Paul ever wrote. It is entirely without personal greetings and without the intimate personal messages of which the other letters are so full. Paul’s knowledge of this church came from other sources, “*Because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus...*” In Colossians, Paul introduced the thought that Jesus Christ is sufficient; now he develops that idea in Ephesians. Man’s dominion has broken the social union from man; class from class, nation from nation, ideology from ideology, Gentile from Jew. So, in this world without Christ, there is nothing but disunity. Let’s explore how Paul prescribed unity and how it should function within the church and within relationships.

---Barclay’s Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Blessings We Have Been Given	Ephesians 1:4-8
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Under Roman law a child could not possess anything and any inheritance willed to him or any gift given to him became the property of his father. It did not matter how old the son was or to what honors and responsibility he had risen, he was absolutely in his Father’s power. This makes it obvious that adoption was a very serious step. The adopted person had all the rights of a legitimate son in the new family and completely lost all rights in his old family. In the eyes of the law he was a new person and all previous debts and obligations were abolished.

- How would you explain Paul’s concept of our being “adopted sons” in the context of the Christian belief to someone who has no knowledge of this?

“Predestined according to His plan....”**Ephesians 1:11 – 14**

Here we have Paul’s first example of the new unity: he speaks of *us* meaning the Jews and *you* meaning the Gentiles. The Jews had their position assigned to them in the plan of God; they were the first to believe in the coming of the Anointed One. The Gentiles received the word through Christian preachers and they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. There *could* be unity between these two groups.

- In what ways do we effectively put the concept of unity to work within our church? Within our community? Within our relationships with others of different beliefs, race, socio-economic status?

GRACE – How does it work?**Ephesians 2:4-9**

Grace is defined as a gift that is given to someone who does not deserve or merit the gift.

- What does “*grace*” mean to you? How would you explain this concept to someone who does not know about this gift from God?
- Read 2:19-21. How do we fit into this picture Paul paints of the community of believers?

Understanding the love of Christ**Ephesians 3:17-19**

In this passage, Paul uses the Greek *katoikein* for “dwell”. This word is used for permanent as opposed to temporary residence.

- What do you find amazing in this passage? What comfort does it offer?

Christian Virtues**Ephesians 4:1-6**

Paul lists some of the great basic words of the Christian faith. Define what these words mean to you:

- Humble
- Gentle
- Patient
- Bearing with one another
- Love

In vs. 25, Paul cautions against the following actions:

*Speaking falsehood**Sinning in anger**Unwholesome talk**Bitterness**Rage**Brawling**Slander and malice**Sexual immorality and impurity**Greed (Paul says this is idolatry)**Drunkenness*

- Why are these unbecoming to the Christian life? Are negatives contagious?

“Wives, submit to your husbands....”

Ephesians 5:22-28

In *What Paul Really Said About Women*, John Temple Bristow says when Paul was referring to submission, he used the Greek *hupotasso* (hoop-o-tass-o). The voice of this word Paul uses means something like “give allegiance to,” “tend to the needs of,” “be supportive of,” or “be responsive to.” In the Church, *hupotassamai* is not a ranking of persons as ruler and ruled, but means an appeal to have members live out their call to be “the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

- With this interpretation, what relationship between man and wife is Paul recommending? With members within the church?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD: Ephesians 6:10-17

As Paul writes this letter from his Roman prison, he was chained by the wrist to a Roman soldier, night and day to ensure he would not escape. The soldier’s armor suggests a picture to him. In what ways does this armor play a part of Christian faith?

- Belt of truth
- Breastplate of righteousness
- Sandals
- Shield and sword
- Helmet

How do we acquire this armor?

HUMAN CONDITION

The world seems not an orderly, dependable world but a world of massive outpourings of hatred and violence, holes in the ozone, planets crashing, birds and animals in conflict with bulldozers, rivers running yellow with chemicals or red with soil erosion. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, and fires defy human sufficiency. Is the cosmos in chaos?

How do you feel overwhelmed by today’s world?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community enters the struggle against evil, equipped with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and God’s word.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In what ways do I find my faith a comfort to me in these times of struggle?

CLOSING AND PRAYER

*Christians are like snowflakes. We are different individually and we may be fragile.
But put a whole bunch of us together and we can stop traffic!*

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 30: Leadership in the Church

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Godliness**

Theme Scripture:

“If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed.” 1 Timothy 4:6

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Maxie D. Dunnam

What is the relationship between the gospel, our calling, and our passion for ministry. How do Christians live distinctively in a secular setting?

1 TIMOTHY

The two letters to Timothy, one to Titus and a very short one to Philemon are different in the fact there were written to *individuals*, where as all other Pauline letters are written to *churches*.

They are private rather than public letters. The letters to Timothy have become known as the Pastoral Epistles: in the first letter he gives Timothy instructions concerning ecclesiastical order; in the second letter he deals with an issue of *pastoral care*. Paul addresses matters of care and organization of the church, give instructions as to how God’s house should be administered, as to what kind of people the leaders and pastors of the Church should be, and as to how the threats which endanger the purity of Christian faith and life should be dealt with. 1 Timothy 1:18-19: “*Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.*”

---*Barclay’s Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Instructions on Worship	1 Timothy 2:8-12
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Once again, we see a clash of cultures. The early Church took over the Jewish way of standing to pray with hands outstretched and the palms upwards. (Luke 18:10-14; the Pharisee and the tax collector).

The Jewish nation gave a bigger place to women in the home and family than did the pagan cultures. However, Jewish women were forbidden to learn the law, only came to synagogue to *hear*, not to learn as did the men, were forbidden to teach in a school, had

no obligation to attend the sacred feasts and festivals. Jewish women usually covered their heads in public; hair was considered a very sensual part of the body.

Greek women led very confined lives in their own quarters, never appeared on the street alone, and never went to a public assembly. But Greek women put great value in dressing and braiding of the hair. Prostitution was a cornerstone of worship in the pagan Greek religions; temples had sacred prostitutes serving the various gods. The early church congregation was a mix of these two cultures.

- Why is Paul cautioning the church to always lift hands in prayer without anger or disputing?
- Why does Paul feel so strongly about modest dress for women in the congregation?

Leadership within the Church	1 Timothy 3:1-12
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The church has used several titles for its leaders: elder, bishop, overseer and superintendent. In this passage, Paul seems to set some very high standards: they were formally set apart for their office; they had to undergo a period of testing; they were paid for the work they did; they could be reprimanded; they had the duty of presiding over the assembly and of the teaching; they were not to be a recent convert.

- Why is Paul so clear on who should lead?
- What standards do we have for our church leaders today?
- What can we do to hold to these standards without making our spiritual leaders feel isolated and alone?

Care for Widows, Elders	1 Timothy 5:1-8
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It was once said, “When an elderly person dies, it is like a library which burns down.” No nation has ever cared more for the needy and the elderly than the Jews. We remember that mercy was considered a weakness in the Greco-Roman world.

- In what ways would Paul’s teaching have been very radical?
- Consider our culture today. What is our attitude toward: the elderly, lower socio-economic groups, homeless, disenfranchised, handicapped and disabled? What corrections do we need to make?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD:

1 TIMOTHY 6

- V. 3-5 What does Paul have to say about false teachers, pretenders, and creators of friction?
- V. 17-19 In what ways does wealth become evil? What is Paul's advice to those who have wealth? What examples can we identify in our world today?
- Paul has equated greed with idolatry. In what ways is this true?
- V. 11-12 Paul charges Timothy with how to lead the congregation. In what ways can we, ourselves, put this advice to work in our own lives?

HUMAN CONDITION

Our vision is stunted and our energy sapped by unclear expectations, trust and support withheld, and no encouragement to take risks.

In what can we find clear vision, learn to trust, and be willing to take risks?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

The faithful community offers its leaders respect and accountability, encouragement and nurture.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: In what ways can I support the Christian leaders of my church? What could I do to encourage and honor the job they do?

CLOSING AND PRAYER

*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
His love endures forever
Psalm 107:1*

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 31: From Generation to Generation

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Teach**

Theme Scripture:

“Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.” 2 Timothy 1:13-14

How Can We Pray for One Another?

VIDEO PRESENTATION

Presenter: Zan Holmes, Jr.

Imagine you are Timothy or Titus receiving instruction and advice from a veteran missionary. Concentrate on feeling as well as hearing.

2 TIMOTHY

Paul’s object in writing was to inspire and strengthen Timothy for his task in Ephesus. Timothy was young, and he had a hard time battling against the heresies and the infections that were bound to threaten the Church: Judaizers who tried to force believers to observe the Jewish ritual of circumcision before they could be accepted as members of the church; Gnostics who denied the deity of Jesus and believed all matter was evil, even the creation; sexual immorality which continued to pervade the church. Paul confirms his confidence in Timothy’s ability, reminds him of his family tradition, of being set apart for office and gifted in teaching, and of qualities which should characterize the Christian teacher: courage, power, love, and self-discipline.

---*Barclay’s Letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*

SCRIPTURE AND STUDY MANUAL:

Statement of Faith	2 Timothy 1:11-12
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- Paraphrase this passage.
- What statement of faith does Paul claim for his “commander?”

Solider for Christ	2 Timothy 2:1-7
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- List 1 or 2 principles Paul gives Timothy for leadership that would help you.

Preparedness**2 Timothy 2:15**

- In order to handle the Word of Truth correctly, what must we do?

Is the Scripture Valid?**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

- How does Paul answer this question? How do you respond?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD:**2 Timothy 4:1-8**

- List 3-4 principles Paul gives Timothy on Leadership.
- In verse 6, Paul says he is being “poured out like a drink offering.” What does he mean?
- Why does Paul describe his ministry as a “race?”

HUMAN CONDITION

Without memory, we lack identity. Who are we? What will shape us? What will guide us? What can we build on?

How important is knowing who you are to you?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community, entrusted with the treasure of the gospel, teaches it to its children and its children’s children.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE: Consider this Mark of Obedient Community. In what ways have you passed on this treasure in your family? What more can you do?

CLOSING AND PRAYER

Earnestly study to show yourself approved to God, a workman unashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 (The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew, Greek, English)

Faith Story:

Before the last gathering, review your reflections throughout the lessons under “Remember Who You Are.” Write a short, simple statement of your belief, what you believe to be God’s plan for you, how you are gifted to serve, and how you might take steps to help you walk closer in His ways. Include a Scripture verse which has significant meaning for you.

DISCIPLE 3
Remember Who You Are
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

Week 32: Remember Who You Are

GATHERING AND PRAYER

Opening Prayer

Theme: **Clay Jars**

Theme Scripture:

“We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.”

2 Corinthians 4:7

OUR FINAL GATHERING

This is a time of reflection and remembering. You have read Scripture, reflected, remembered and formed your ideas about God, your faith, who you are, and where your journey takes you from this point. Share some aspects of that faith with others in the group.

Who is God?

Read Isaiah 45:5-7, 46:3-4, 55:8-9, 64:8.

- In your own words, define your understanding of God. What does it mean to have “relationship” with God?
- How would you explain God to someone who does not know Him?

Growing in Faith

Read Matthew 13:31-32.

- Why can the Kingdom of God be compared to a mustard seed?
- Assess your growth during this year in prayer, Scripture study, worship, faith

Remembering Who I Am

- What is God’s plan for me?
- How would God have me interact with those around me?
- In what ways have I demonstrated God’s love for me to those around me?
- What am I gifted to do in my life? In what ways am I able to use those gifts at this time?

- What steps can I take that would help me walk closer with God?

Read Philippians 4:1-13

- In what ways does this passage provide encouragement for me in daily living?

Life Verse

Share a verse(s) that you could claim as a “life verse.” Why does this passage speak to you?

MARK OF OBEDIENT COMMUNITY

Obedient community witnesses with confidence because God has touched our lives.

How Can We Pray for One Another?

Video Presentation

Presenter: Richard B. Wilke

Listen as a community established and nurtured by things remembered. After viewing the video, move into Holy Communion without discussion.

Holy Communion

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.
Matthew 28:19-20