

Questions for Your Journal

Use these following questions to evaluate what you learned from Sunday's sermon.

Summary:

- The main thing the speaker wants me to do, be, and/or feel as a result of this message.

Application to My Life:

- What did God say to me through this message?
 - How does my life measure up to this word?
 - What action(s) will I take to bring my life in line with this word?
 - What truth do I need to study further?
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Israel's Hope and Ours

Isaiah had been given a difficult task. After his vision of God's heavenly throne room in chapter six, he was commissioned to preach to God's people, Israel, that they might harden their hearts toward the Lord until He sent a Babylonian army to exercise His judgment on their sins and take them away into exile (Is 6:9-13). In Isaiah 39:5-8, the prophet gives his clearest and most alarming warning when he tells King Hezekiah, "Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left, says the LORD" (39:6, *NASB*).

Immediately following this disturbing and climactic warning, God instructs Isaiah to do something that "must have been a great joy to hear," namely, to give Israel hope.¹ The Lord says to the prophet, "Comfort, comfort my people...speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity is pardoned" (Is 40:1-2). The comforting prophecy that follows in 40:3-11 is a God-given oracle, a Spirit-inspired vision of what will happen when God restores his people from exile and brings them back to His holy city, Jerusalem. This vision is intended to give hope to the people who, more than two centuries later will experience God's gracious act of national restoration and salvation.

The return to Jerusalem from Babylon will occur along a desert highway, on which every obstacle will be removed (Is 40:2-3). However, the terrain won't be the only obstacle that has to be overcome, the people's hardness of heart and sinfulness must be done away with by "an amazing revelation of the glory of the Lord."² Ultimately, this message of hope serves as an assurance from God to his people. Despite their oppression under Babylonian rulers, despite weakness that is likened to withering grass (40:7), God promises to come with might and care for his people as a shepherd tends for his flock. Their hope rests in him alone.

You can probably understand how this message would be welcomed by God's people in exile, but how does it come to us, God's people living after the coming of Christ? First, Isaiah's prophecy didn't just point to the historical restoration of Israel, it also referred to the spiritual return of God's people to him through the revelation of Jesus Christ who is "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb 1:3, *ESV*). Second, the church is God's new exiled people (e.g., James 1:1 and 1 Pet 1:1) and we are waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus who will bring us with him into his established kingdom. Though our world seems to be spinning out of control, the Lord Jesus promises to come again and reign on earth. During this season of Advent, we remind ourselves that we are not in our final state, but are awaiting our savior. Even so, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Encounter

Take a few minutes to read Romans 15:1–13 in a couple of translations. Make a note of any differences between the translations and anything that especially jumps out at you.

Reflect

Throughout the letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul goes to great lengths to show how Jesus is the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles (e.g., Rom 1:3–6; 2:9–11; 11:11–16). This was not God's "Plan B," but, as Paul's quotations show, it was actually a fulfillment of prophecy. **In Romans 15:9–12, Paul quotes four passages from the Old Testament. Write them down here, then look them up and read them. What do you notice about these passages?**

Paul says that the salvation extended to Gentiles is intended to lead "the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy" (Rom 13:9; cf. Rom 11:25–32). **What is God's mercy? When was the last time you thanked him for it?**

Read Romans 15:13 where Paul describes God as “the God of hope.” Think back to Sunday’s sermon, and lookup some other places where Paul talks about hope (e.g., Rom 5:1–5; 2 Cor 1:3–7; Gal 5:2–6; Eph 2:11–13; Phil 1:18–20). **Write out a definition of hope using your own words. Where does hope come from? What is the relationship between hope and belief?**

Paul expects that the Romans’ hope will lead them to experience joy and peace as they continue believing and trusting God (Rom 15:13). **Read 1 Peter 1:3–9. Why does hope enable Christians to face life’s difficulties with joy and peace? Why does facing life’s difficulties with joy and peace also strengthen our hope?**

Examine

Based on 2 Timothy 3:16 (“*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*”), this series of questions is intended to help you figure out what you should do or believe in response to this text. (*This passage may not have a clear answer for each question. Just use them to prompt your thinking.*)

1. What does this passage tell me to believe?

(How does it teach me?)

2. What does this passage tell me not to believe?

(How does it reprove me?)

3. How does this passage tell me not to live?

(How does it correct me?)

4. How does this passage tell me to live?

(How does it train me in righteousness?)

Embrace

After spending significant time with this passage, you've probably learned a lot and heard God speak to you through His Word. Look back at your responses to the previous questions and ask God to show you how you can respond to this text this week.

Write down some ideas for how you can respond to the truth of God's Word.

About The Map

The Map exists to help you consistently reflect on Scripture as you pursue maturity in Christ. When you devote yourself to reading God's Word, and meditate on what you read, you're allowing Him to shape your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

Notes

1. Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III, *The New International Version Bible Commentary, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 1114.
2. Ibid.



Disciple-Making Guide

Kids Kindergarten through 6th grade receive Adventure Tokens for discipleship activities completed during the week. They can spend them at the Adventure Store on the last Sunday of the month.

Big Picture Questions for Unit 27: “Jesus the Risen King”

Preschool: Q: What is our mission?
A: *Our mission is to tell others about Jesus.*

Kids (1-6): Q: What is our mission as believers?
A: *Our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit.*

This Week’s Family Reading Plan

for Preschoolers: *Jesus Ascended to Heaven + Jesus Christ Returns**

Day 1: *Nehemiah 5:1-13*

Day 2: *Nehemiah 5:14-19*

Day 3: *Nehemiah 9:1-15*

Day 4: *Nehemiah 9:16-25*

Day 5: *Nehemiah 9:26-38*

*Preschool readings are taken from *The Big Picture Interactive Bible Stories for Toddlers, New Testament* (B&H Publishing Group), available at Amazon.com & LifeWay Christian Store.

Key Passage for Unit 27: “Jesus the Risen King”

Preschoolers: “..He was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:4, *CSB*).

Kids (1-6 grade):

“For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...”
(1 Corinthians 15:3-4, *CSB*).

Northway’s Family Ministry uses *The Gospel Project* to help preschoolers, kids, and students grow in their knowledge of Scripture and of Jesus Christ, about whom it was all written (Luke 24:44-49).



Adventure Token Coupon

Fill this out and bring it to Bible Study for your tokens!

I worked on learning my big picture question and key passage _____.

I read my Bible at home _____.

Child’s Name _____.

Parent’s Signature _____.

30 BIBLICAL BASICS

CORE BELIEFS

Trinity | 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Personal God | Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace | Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible | 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God that guides my belief and action.

Identity in Christ | John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church | Ephesians 4:15

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth.

Humanity | John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion | Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Stewardship | Psalm 24:1-2

I believe that everything I am and everything I own belong to God.

Eternity | John 14:1-2

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus will return to judge all people and to establish His eternal kingdom.

CORE PRACTICES

Worship | Psalm 95:1-2

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer | Psalm 66:18-20

I pray to God to know him, to find direction for my life, and to lay my requests before him.

Bible Study | Hebrews 4:12

I study the Bible to know God and his truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness | Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Total Surrender | Romans 12:1

I dedicate my life to God's purposes.

Biblical Community | Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, in the life of others, and in the world.

Spiritual Gifts | Romans 12:4-6

I know my spiritual gifts and use them to fulfill God's purposes.

Offering My Time | Colossians 3:17

I offer my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving My Resources | 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Sharing My Faith | Ephesians 6:19-20

I share my faith with others to fulfill God's purposes.

CORE VIRTUES

Love | 1 John 4:10-12

I am committed to loving God and loving others.

Joy | John 15:11

Despite my circumstances, I feel inner contentment and understand my purpose in life.

Peace | Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because I have found peace with God, peace with others, and peace with myself.

Self-Control | Titus 2:11-13

I have the power through Christ to control myself.

Hope | Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Patience | Proverbs 14:29

I am slow to anger and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness | 1 Thessalonians 5:15

I choose to be kind and good in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness | Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness | Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Humility | Philippians 2:3-4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

The 30 Biblical Basics are the skeleton of a person being formed into the image of Jesus by His Spirit (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18), a helpful framework for the Christian's thoughts, actions, and character. As we commit ourselves to growing in Christ through the process of spiritual formation, we pray these statements become increasingly true of us. When they are, we'll be able to carry out the biblical mandate to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27), and to truly **love, live, and lead like Jesus.**