

Lesson 12 | November 22, 2020

Other New Testament Letters



Study Text: Hebrews 1:1–4; 3:1–6; 7:23–28; James 2:14–26; 2 Peter 1:3–8; 1 John 3:1–3, 16–18; 4:7–12, 16–21; Jude 1:17–21

Central Truth: God's Word portrays the Christian life.

Key Verse: 2 Peter 1:4

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (KJV).

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (NIV).

Learning Objectives

- Understand why Christians must recognize that Christ is preeminent and that faith must be accompanied by works.
- Accept the responsibility that accompanies the call to express faith through good works.
- Consider ways to express faith and godly love through good works.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: The eight letters in the New Testament not written by Paul are referred to as the “general epistles.” Three were written by John, two by Peter, one by James (the Lord’s brother), and one by Jude (also a brother of Jesus). The writer of Hebrews is unknown and is a topic of speculation among theologians, but the message of Hebrews is important. Today’s lesson focuses on the truths contained in some of these letters.

Opening Activity—How Are Christians Different?

Ask: *We know that we are saved by faith and not by works. Faith is not a visible quality. So, how can unbelievers see faith displayed in the lives of their believing friends, loved ones, coworkers, and neighbors?*

You may get answers such as these: their love for one another, the way they treat their neighbors, going to church, and sharing their faith with others.

Say: This lesson focuses on **three foundational truths of the Christian faith: Christ alone is our High Priest and Author of our salvation; faith without works is dead; and the love of God must shine through us to the world.** Let's pray that the Holy Spirit will make these truths real to us. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

This lesson considers important teachings from the Epistles of James, Peter, Jude, John, and the author of Hebrews. After two lessons on the writings of the apostle Paul, the focus here turns to those from others within the circle of leaders in the Early Church. Space will not allow lengthy treatments of the background of each book, but access to a study Bible or commentaries will be helpful.

Part 1—The Preeminence of Christ

Jesus Is God's Son

Hebrews 1:1–4; 3:1–6

Although the Authorized Version has the heading, “Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews,” there is still a question as to authorship. The American Revised Version corrects this and gives the heading, “The Epistle to the Hebrews.” In spite of the fact that the Pauline authorship cannot be confirmed in a dogmatic fashion, there is abundant evidence that Paul was the author. Both internal and external evidence support the authorship of Paul. The writer had been in bonds (Heb 10:34); he wrote from Italy (Heb 13:24); his companion was Timothy (Heb 13:23). The writing is Pauline and, in my opinion, Peter identifies Paul as the writer (2 Peter 3:15, 16; cf. 1 Peter 1:1).

DATE: Hebrews 10:11 reveals that it was written before the destruction of the temple by Titus in A.D. 70.

THEME: Coleridge said that Romans revealed the necessity of the Christian faith, but that Hebrews revealed the superiority of the Christian faith.

[Heb 1:1-4 KJV] 1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us

by [his] Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of [his] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

[Heb 3:1-6 KJV] 1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses [was faithful] in all his house. 3 For this [man] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4 For every house is builded by some [man]; but he that built all things [is] God. 5 And Moses verily [was] faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Say: The lessons for this quarter have shown the Bible as the story of God's plan of redemption for humanity. Hebrews, perhaps more than any other New Testament book, ties the Old Testament and the New Testament together, showing Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The writer of Hebrews opened the letter with the basic theme of the book—the **truth that Jesus is God and deserves all worship** (Hebrews 1:1–4). The writer encouraged readers with the truth of Christ's preeminence, and for good reason. **Should one fail to continue following Christ, there would be no other hope for forgiveness and reconciliation with God.** This is one of the key themes of the Book of Hebrews.

From the beginning, God has always spoken to humankind. In the Old Testament, faithful and true messengers—the prophets—received and communicated the word from God, and did so in a variety of ways. However, Christ is the ultimate "Word" of God to humans. Instead of speaking through prophets, God now has spoken in His Son.

It was through the Son that creation—including the sustaining of creation— occurred, and Christ has been made the Heir of everything. **The Son is the radiance of God's glory, not because He merely reflects the glory of God but because the glory of God is within Him. There is no variation as to the Son's representation of God; the representation is exact, full, complete, and accurate. After His work in providing complete cleansing for humans from sin, He took His seat in the heavenlies.**

Whereas chapter 1 asserts that Jesus is superior to heavenly beings (angels), chapter 3 asserts Christ's superiority to Moses, the great deliverer who was a faithful servant in God's house (see Numbers 12:7). Jesus, by contrast, was the Builder of the house and was faithful as the Son, over the house (Hebrews 3:1–6).

The phrase "apostle and high priest" in 3:1 points to Christ's preeminence. Scholars note the connection between the apostle and high priest. **Both acted on behalf of another: the apostle represented Christ to the people, and the priest represented the people before God. But while Moses represented the people before God, he was not a priest (that role was filled by his brother, Aaron). Only Jesus could fill both functions. Only He could be the living Word and the high priest.**

Discuss

? What does Hebrews say about Jesus in comparison with angels and with Moses?

? Who does the unbelieving world say that Jesus is, and how does this compare with who we know Him to be?

Jesus Is Our High Priest

Hebrews 7:23–28

[Heb 7:23-28 KJV] 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this [man], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, [maketh] the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Say: The Old Testament system of sacrifices was administered by the priests who were descendants of Aaron, who, along with his sons, was ordained to serve as a priest in Exodus 29. **But Jesus, our High Priest, is far superior to the priesthood of Aaron. He was without sin so He could present himself as the Sacrifice to provide redemption for us.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The theological assertion about the preeminence of Christ is seen in Hebrews 3:1, with the naming of Christ as apostle and high priest. It became more focused by the writer from Hebrews 4:14, and is carried forward throughout the remainder of the book, with differing emphases. **Hebrews 7:23–28 encapsulates the basics of the argument,**

reminding us that Jesus, as the Son of God, is superior to anyone and anything that has been created.

Jesus is the High Priest, superior to the levitical system of sacrifices, because He has a permanent priesthood. In the levitical system, the tenure of the priests ended with physical death. But Jesus is eternal—forever past and forever future. The salvation He provides is all inclusive, not merely the temporary removal of guilt for sinful behavior. Since He is seated, a reality that testifies to His having completed His offering, He does not need to stand before the Father and remind Him of what He accomplished.

Jesus is superior to the levitical system because of His character—**holy, blameless, set apart from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.** The priests of the levitical system were human, subject to the frailties of humanity. So, they had to offer sacrifices both for their own sins and for those of the people, a ministry that they continued from day to day. **Jesus, being without sin, offered himself a complete sacrifice for sin, once for all.**

The levitical priests offered sacrifices of animals, grains, oils, etc. **The great High Priest, Jesus, offered himself; He was both the Priest and the Sacrifice. His priesthood was not like that which fulfilled the Law through the tribe of Levi (see 7:1–11). He was a Priest, from the tribe of Judah, because of an oath, ascribed to God (see 7:14–22), which the writer quotes from Psalm 110:4. Melchizedek preceded the Law and was not a Levite but the King of Salem (most likely Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18–20). Yet Abraham submitted to him in the paying of tithes. In placing Christ within the order of Melchizedek, Hebrews affirms Him as superior to the priestly and sacrificial system of the Law.**

Resource Packet Item 1: The Levitical Priesthood

Distribute the information sheet showing the purposes and limitations of the levitical priesthood. Briefly touch on each item and contrast it to the priesthood of Christ as described in the New Testament. Take time to give praise for Jesus, our great High Priest.

Discuss

? How might the Book of Hebrews help you better understand why Scripture teaches that Jesus is the only Way to salvation?

? What are some ways people attempt to reach God outside of Jesus, and how should we respond when we see someone making such an attempt?

Part 2—The Provision of Faith

Faith Produces Good Deeds

James 2:14–26; 2 Peter 1:3–8

1. James, brother of John, son of Zebedee, called by our Lord “son of thunder” (Mark 3:17). He was slain by Herod (Acts 12:1, 2).
2. James, son of Alphaeus, called “James the less” (Mark 15:40). He is mentioned in the list of apostles, but very little is known concerning him.
3. James, the Lord’s brother (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3), in reality a half-brother according to the flesh. He became head of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13). This James is evidently the writer of this epistle (Galatians 2:9).

DATE: A.D. 45-50. This was the first book of the New Testament to be written. Some have taken the position that James wrote to combat the writings of Paul. It is obvious that this is an erroneous position, since none of Paul’s epistles were in existence at the time of this writing.

JAMES AND PAUL: The seeming contradiction between James and Paul can be easily explained when the message of James is considered. James takes the position, as does Paul, that we are justified by faith but that the faith which justifies produces good works. Calvin said, **“Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.”**

Justification is shown by works — not justified by, but for, good works. James and Paul present the two aspects of justification by faith.

[Jas 2:14-26 KJV] 14 What [doth it] profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be [ye] warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what [doth it] profit? 17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. 19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent [them] out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

WRITER: Simon Peter (2 Peter 1:1)

The Petrine authorship of 2 Peter has been challenged more than the authorship of any other book in the New Testament. Dr. William Moorehead said, "The Second Epistle of Peter comes to us with less historical support of its genuineness than any other book of the New Testament." However, this has caused conservative scholars to give adequate attention to this epistle so that today it is well established that Peter wrote this letter. The autobiographical sections afford internal evidence of the Petrine authorship (see 2 Peter 1:13, 14, 16-18; 3:1).

DATE: About A.D. 66. This second epistle was written shortly after his first epistle (2 Peter 3:1) and a short while before his martyrdom (2 Peter 1:13, 14). (See 1 Peter.)

THEME: This is the swan song of Peter, as 2 Timothy is the swan song of Paul. There is a striking similarity. Both epistles put up a warning sign, along the pilgrim pathway the church is traveling, to identify the awful apostasy that was on the way at that time and now in our time has arrived. What was then like a cloud the size of a man's hand today envelops the sky and produces a storm of hurricane proportions. Peter warns of heresy among teachers as Paul warns of heresy among the laity. Both Peter and Paul speak in a joyful manner of their approaching death (2 Peter 1:13, 14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). Both apostles anchor the church on the Scriptures as the only defense against the coming storm.

[2Pe 1:3-8 KJV] 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Say: In Lesson 10 of this quarter, we discussed our inability to earn our salvation through good works. **It is important to balance our discussion of faith and works by understanding that God's grace is attained through faith to bring us salvation, but as a result of that salvation, we are to live in a way that pleases Him.** Some would have us believe that there is a discrepancy between the teachings of James and those of Paul. However, they are really just two sides of the same coin. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

James 2:14–26 tackles the fundamental question of how we define saving faith. What does it mean to profess belief in the gospel? James 2:14 begins the passage by asking questions that anticipate a negative answer, for James sought to prove that faith without deeds does not save.

To make the point, James presented some illustrations, the first being the dramatic story of merely responding to a needy person with a lack of concern. Such faith, absent any provision of clothing and food, accomplishes nothing.

The contrast between one who claims faith without deeds and the other who has deeds without faith led to the challenging reminder that even devils believe in one God and shudder, but such belief accomplishes nothing unaccompanied by deeds of repentance and good works. Abraham, of whom it is said that he believed God and was credited with righteousness, testified to and fulfilled that faith by offering Isaac, the son that had fulfilled God's promise to him (see Genesis 15:6; 22:1–19).

The last illustration that faith requires works cites the story of Rahab (James 2:25). Rahab, a Canaanite and citizen of Jericho, verbalized her understanding of what God was doing in His people, then evidenced faith by hiding the spies sent by Joshua and helping them escape unharmed (see Joshua 2:1–24). Her faith is further evidenced by her incorporation into the lineage of Jesus (Matthew 1:5) and inclusion in the list of heroes of the faith (see Hebrews 11:31).

Peter offered us a very practical teaching on this topic by exhorting God's people to add to their faith a variety of tangible and observable qualities, capped by love (2 Peter 1:3–8). **This life of genuine faith, evidenced in works, brings effectiveness to our Christian lives.**

Faith for salvation requires more than verbal assertion, agreeing with the gospel message. It includes demonstrating faith by involvement in the doing of good deeds of mercy and grace that engage hurting people with the fullness of the gospel.

Resource Packet Item 2: Teachings of James, Peter, and Paul

Distribute the work sheet and ask students to work in small groups to compare teachings of James, Peter, and Paul in the indicated passages. Then ask a few of the groups to share their findings. Be sure to show that these passages are not in conflict with one another, but work together to present the truth.

Discuss

? What are some specific examples of the deeds of a believer that evidence faith for salvation?

? How can we ensure that we don't confuse seeing works as a mandatory fruit of saving faith with seeing works as a means to salvation?

Be Persistent in Faith

Jude 1:17–21

WRITER: Judas. Jude (this is the English form of the name Judas) was the brother of James (see notes on Epistle of James) and was also a half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 13:55).

DATE: A.D. 66-69

THEME: Assurance in days of apostasy. The word for "keep" occurs 5 times (see verses 1, 6, 21, 24).

REMARKS: Jude was intending to write an epistle regarding our "common salvation" when the Spirit detoured him to write concerning the apostasy. It is a graphic and striking description of the apostasy. What was

a little cloud the size of a man's hand in Jude's day is, in our day, a storm of hurricane proportions — because we are in the apostasy of which he foretold. It is a question now of how much worse it can become before genuine believers are taken out by the Rapture.

Jude gives the only record in the Scriptures of the contention over the body of Moses. Also, only Jude gives the prophecy of Enoch.

Jude affords a fitting introduction to the Book of Revelation.

[Jde 1:17-21 KJV] 17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Say: The short Book of Jude describes ungodly people who would try to lead people away from God. The book calls believers to stand up for their faith in the midst of ungodliness. It then provides instruction on how Christians can prepare for the spiritual battles they will face. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Jude was compelled in his Epistle to **challenge his readers to contend for the faith.** Ungodly false teachers were making a negative impact on the community of faith, and Jude exposed their methods and hypocrisy. **He also encouraged the community of faith to stand against them (1:17–21).** As he neared the end of the small Epistle, he summarized and applied this message.

The apostles had taught that these challenges were to be expected. (See also 2 Peter 3:1–7, which asserts that such conditions will exist in the last days, especially focusing on the return of Jesus.) **Jude observed those who troubled the Church in broader terms. He noted that they followed their own ungodly desires because they chose to make light of the gospel rather than believe it. They brought division to the community of faith, following their sinful desires.**

To answer them, **Jude instructed believers to consistently build up their grasp of and commitment to the faith. This included praying in the Holy Spirit. The enablement of the Spirit to assist the believer is priceless. Still today, we must stay strong in the love of God, always seeking to live in an environment that**

fosters intimacy with God. Furthermore, the hope of eternal life draws us toward God.

Dealing with those who bring trouble to the Church is a complex issue. Some need to be shown mercy; others need to be rescued from the negative direction of their lives; and still others may need a mixed response of mercy and confrontation.

Discuss

? How can we identify those who are bringing trouble to the Church today?

? How can we know the way in which we need to confront people who are bringing trouble to the Church?

Part 3—The Necessity of Love God Loves Us

1 John 3:1–3,16–18

WRITER: John the Apostle

DATE: A.D. 90-100. John evidently wrote his Gospel first, then his epistles, and finally the Book of Revelation before his death about A.D. 100.

PURPOSE: John expressed the purpose for his writing in each of the three types of revelation:
His Gospel in John 20:30, 31:

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

His first epistle in 1 John 5:13:

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

His revelation in Revelation 1:19:

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

Actually, there is a fivefold purpose expressed in 1 John:

(1) 1Jo 1:3 — “That ye also may have fellowship with us [other believers]; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.”

(2) 1Jo 1:4 — “That your joy may be full.”

(3) 1Jo 2:1 — “That ye sin not.”

(4) 1Jo 5:13 — “That ye may know that ye have eternal life.”

(5) 1Jo 5:13 — “That ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

[1Jo 3:1-3, 16-18 KJV] 1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. ... 16 Hereby perceive we the love [of God], because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels [of compassion]

from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Say: It should not be surprising that the main theme of John's Epistles is love. You may recall that in the Gospel of John, the author referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23; 21:7; 21:20). What an amazing way to identify ourselves! (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In his first Epistle, as in his Gospel, John the apostle taught extensively about the reality of God's love as well as the impact that love must have upon daily living. **He marveled that humans are children of God (1 John 3:1–3). That is possible only because of the great love the Father lavished on humanity. The extravagance of God's love is beyond the ability to understand.**

As a result, however, a world that does not know God cannot know His children, either (verse 1). It should not come as a surprise, then, when unbelievers struggle to understand the nature and breadth of our faith. Such understanding cannot be known by the unbeliever.

Yet we also have a great hope: **We will one day see Christ when He appears, and we will be changed to be like Him.** Such an assurance, unknown to the world, draws the believer forward to be more like Christ.

John then addressed the question fundamental to all of these teachings: **"How can one know that God loves him or her?"** The answer must be based on more than feelings, and John was clear; **we have God's love because Christ died in the place of fallen humanity. The sinless One died for the sinner; the guiltless One died for the guilty, God in Christ assumed humanity to become the sacrifice for sin—that is love (3:16–18)!**

Such love must draw from the believer a determination to demonstrate such love to others. **Such love cannot merely be couched in speeches and discussion; it must be put into action, helping those in need.**

Discuss

? How do you know that God loves you?

? Describe what it means to you to know that God loves you.

God Calls Us To Love Others

1 John 4:7–12,16–21

[1Jo 4:7-12, 16-21 KJV] 7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. ... 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

Say: The majesty of the love of God for humanity, demonstrated by Christ's sacrifice, must become more than a theological tenet that amazes and puzzles us. It must be lived out as the believer demonstrates God's love to others. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

John's challenge in 1 John 4:7 is clear, simple, and well-stated: "Let us love one another" (NIV). Since God is love (not merely one who loves) **His followers demonstrate that they participate in His nature of love by loving others (see 2 Peter 1:4). In this way they testify to being born of God and knowing Him.**

It is contradictory to profess that God is love and yet refuse to be instruments of His love to others. Loving others witnesses to the truth that God lives in humans and is working out His nature in them.

Such love has a further benefit and result: Believers will be able to stand with confidence on the day of judgment (verses 16–21). As our love for others continue to shine brighter and brighter, we bear an increasing likeness to Jesus. His love, evidenced in us, can drive away all fear of not being ready for the Judgment.

Resource Packet Item 3: Love Even When It's Difficult

Distribute the work sheet and have class members discuss difficult issues facing today's culture. Discuss unloving and loving responses.

Discuss

- ? What are some specific ways in which we demonstrate God's love to others?
- ? How can John's teachings on love soothe any fears we have about the future?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: What is your perception of Christ? Your answer is the basis for what you do with this lesson. Christ is not equal to or comparable to anyone; He is preeminent. As our great High Priest, He became the sacrifice for our sins. Only through Him can we have a right relationship with God, one that will lead us to do good works, love God, and love others. God loved

fallen humans, gave His Son for them, and expects His love to be expressed through them to others.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Examine your perception of Christ. Do you really recognize His preeminence in your life? Pray that God will help you overcome any misconceptions.
- Look for someone to whom you can show love this week in a tangible way. Try to find someone with whom you have never before had any interaction.
- Pray for strength, wisdom, and love as you contend for the faith in your community.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Blessings of Obedience.
Deuteronomy 28:1–13

Tuesday:

Faithfulness Rewarded.
Ruth 4:9–17

Wednesday:

Righteous Job Restored.
Job 42:10–17

Thursday:

Jesus' Followers Experience True Rest.
Matthew 11:28–30

Friday:

A New Commandment From Jesus.
John 13:31–35

[Jhn 13:31-35 KJV] 31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Saturday:

The Necessity of Faith.
Hebrews 10:36 through 11:3

[Heb 10:36-39 KJV] 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

[Heb 11:1-3 KJV] 1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.