

Prayers to Respond

We are deeply honored and grateful to walk together through the suffering that Ukraine is experiencing. Our heart and prayer is that Ukraine would be fully restored to freedom from outside control and healed completely from the recent, tragic events through the love, grace, and power of Jesus. The scriptures that we've selected for our Bible Study are simply from the Gospel of Jesus because we believe that this message is the best news for our world.

We learned last week that the power of this message begins with a genuine faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior of our lives. Faith is not only trusting that this message is true but believing that the message of Christ has real power to transform us and the world around us. In this way, the Holy Spirit leads us through this faith to godly actions and transformation that can only come through the grace of Jesus Christ. This week, we will be reading verses about the role of our *response* to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, as we continue praying through faith for the Spirit to move with power in our personal and national situations.

Review

During the first week of our time together, we discussed what it means to lift our grief and sorrows to Jesus in a real and honest way. In Isaiah 53, a prophecy written 700 years before Jesus was born, we learned that the Messiah Jesus would die on a cross so that he could relate to and fully understand our suffering. His heart longs to carry our sorrows, pain, and grief; and he cares deeply about how we feel. Jesus wants to connect with us intimately during our times of suffering, pour grace over us when we sin in our grief, and transform our hearts so we can respond to suffering in healthy ways. Through suffering, we see our desperate need for Jesus's help, and he comforts us when we pray.

Last week, we talked about the second step for healthy grieving – trusting Jesus for our physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. We discovered the many ways that the Lord wants to strengthen our faith when we are suffering: He gives us strength through his Word, his will, his power, and his love. All who turn away from sin and place their full trust in Jesus and his teachings will be forgiven, and he promises an end to our suffering. During these difficult times, we can know that in all things, Jesus is working out his perfect will for his children and for our world so that we can be saved. To show his great love for us as his children, Jesus gives us the seal of his Holy Spirit, who guides us, comforts us, and reminds us of his Word. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus even performs miracles to help us and others around us so that we might trust him more and more. From his Word, we know and trust that God will judge the evil things that men do, and we can trust that Jesus will bring justice to our situation. As we suffer *with* Jesus instead of *apart from* Jesus, we experience his power and his light shining into the darkest places as he moves into our situation. As Jesus pours his grace and hope upon us during these times, we can experience the joy of his love and a genuine connection to his Presence. As we rise from our grief through the Spirit, we can become light and love to others around us who are also suffering. In this way, Christ's divine love is spread through us.

Lesson 1

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

Acts 2:36-41

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” ³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” ⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt world.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Деяния 2:36-41

³⁶ Итак твердо знай, весь дом Израилев, что Бог соделал Господом и Христом Сего Иисуса, Которого вы распяли. ³⁷ Услышав это, они умилились сердцем и сказали Петру и прочим Апостолам: что нам делать, мужи братия? ³⁸ Петр же сказал им: покайтесь, и да крестится каждый из вас во имя Иисуса Христа для прощения грехов; и получите дар Святаго Духа. ³⁹ Ибо вам принадлежит обетование и детям вашим и всем дальним, кого ни призовет Господь Бог наш. ⁴⁰ И другими многими словами он свидетельствовал и увещевал, говоря: спасайтесь от рода сего развращенного. ⁴¹ Итак охотно принявшие слово его крестились, и присоединилось в тот день душ около трех тысяч.

After our study last week, you might be thinking, “I believe! I receive!” Now what? These men in Acts 2 were asking the same question. Once these men believed the message of Jesus, what did Peter tell them to do? (v. 38)

- Repent and be baptized

In Greek, the word “repent” means to change your mind, specifically about sin: to hate the things that hurt God and love the things that honor God. If you have decided to follow Jesus, how has your mind, your life, and your actions changed? Give some examples. If you just started believing the message of Jesus, how has your mind been changing recently?

- I am changing my mind all the time. I can see things in me that I need to work on, so God is changing me. In the beginning, I stopped using bad words (curse words).
- My whole life changed – I stopped getting drunk, smoking, cursing, partying, an immoral lifestyle, hating people. My sins were obvious. And the obvious sins, God changed in me almost immediately. But it took much longer for Jesus to change the inside of my heart in the areas of selfishness, loving others genuinely, being competitive, gossip, anger, my character, and a mature attitude. He’s still changing me today – every day, every week. More recently – my anxiety and fear.
- My life was the same as what she shared. I am reading a book now that is helping me to understand is that the only place I can go for healing is Jesus. If I try myself, it doesn’t work. During these days, I have been attending a recovery program at church that covers

anxiety, grief, sexual sins, addiction, marriage struggles, life struggles, etc. And it is helping me to see things that I didn't realize before – like fear, regret, grieving that I haven't done, impure and immoral things that I have done in the past. These struggles caused me a lot of guilt and shame. These teachings are helping me to get past these things.

- As others, I have many sins, maybe not so obvious, but I do have them. Despite believing in Jesus, I can say that I was (wasn't?) able to overcome these sins. I try, but it is very hard because I've had these sins for many years. I am accustomed to living this way and these habits are with us for a long time, and it is very difficult to overcome.

Last week, we learned that we are saved from condemnation (hell, punishment for our sins, God's wrath) through our faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. How else does Jesus want to save us? (v. 40) Give modern-day or personal examples.

- He wants to save us from a corrupt generation (a sinful world), from our ungodly behavior, from slavery to our sins.
- I was a child of a teacher and was a good girl at school, so I didn't have any big problems with drugs, alcohol, or bad company. We prayed in my home, but I didn't read the Bible because we didn't have a Bible in my home. We didn't behave badly, but we were normal people and better than most teens around us. That is why I never thought that I was a sinner and that I needed to repent. I heard the Word from my grandmother. She had a Bible in Slavic language, so I couldn't understand it, but she told me a lot of stories about Jesus, but she never told me that these stories are from the Bible. In the university, I started realizing that these stories were from the Bible. We didn't even have enough money to listen to music, only national radio. From there, I heard the Bible stories, but I still didn't think they were real. I repeated the words of a repenting prayer, so I guess that is why God was with me. It took 15-20 years to make me realize with my mind, feel in my heart, and start obeying God. The worst thing in my life was my marriage struggles. My father was an alcoholic. When I was 7, my parents divorced. I also had a stepfather, and these years were not the best years of my childhood. [When I got married], my husband also did not have a good example of family. We couldn't understand how to overcome all the problems that happened every day. I asked God to help me. I heard about people being baptized experiencing freedom from sin. But for me, it was really hard to obey my husband. When I understood that I had to be baptized, I understood that I couldn't go back to my sin. I had to obey my husband. This was hard because he was not obeying Jesus. It was a time of suffering because I learned that we could not just divorce, according to Jesus's teachings. I was also afraid that my husband didn't want to be baptized because he said he wasn't ready. But God does miracles! I wanted to be baptized, but my husband was against it. It was through prayer that [I realized] that I needed to obey God first. The year after we were baptized was the hardest year of our lives. We offended each other and learned that we are very selfish and should work on our flesh. We said bad words and hurt each other. Now we have peace and joy – not because of us but because of God. Now, we don't have the desire to do this. Our situation now [with this war] is horrible, but we have peace, and it cannot be explained.
- We can have sins that are harder to see – maybe we experienced anger, unforgiveness, pride (I'm religiously better than someone else), competitive, hurting people with our words, selfishness – I think more about myself than others, I think I'm right and the other person is wrong, my way is better, I'm smarter than someone else, I'm more righteous, etc. Jesus wants to save us not just from outward sins, but sins of the heart, like pride and self-righteousness.

If Jesus is the one who saves us through his power, what does Paul mean when he says, “Save yourself!”?

- He means that we must make a personal decision to be more like Jesus instead of trying to be like the world.
- We must turn away from a worldly lifestyle – greed, making education or career the lord of our lives, social standards for goodness, social standards for acceptance, putting our trust in government, money, education, people, etc.
- Jesus saves us from condemnation, but we must decide that we want to turn away from sin and from the world.

Think about your own recent suffering. What would it look like to hate what is evil and love what is good?

- We need to understand that what is happening is evil.
- Maybe in the past, we didn’t think something was evil – like using bad words – but when we accept God’s moral standards, we start believing in Jesus, and we see that what we used to do was evil, like we cheated people in business because everyone does it. How else can I survive in my country? Because of Jesus, we begin hating the idea of cheating people, but now we do good to them – not give them less but giving them more – and we love it!
- In our current situation, we might begin using hate phrases that use curse words to express ourselves. We can start hating this too because the root of this phrase is hating others, not loving them. We are called to bless our enemies. We shouldn’t curse but bless.
- The root of cursing is anger and hatred.

How has your mind been changing about your situation and your suffering? (*We didn’t have time to answer this question.*)

Write a prayer statement about how you’re your heart, your mind, and your actions have been changing since you’ve been studying more about Jesus. In what ways do you want Jesus to save you from this world or change your heart?

- Heavenly Father, thank you for Jesus, for sending him to me, and for eternal life. I also want to thank you that I can bring my sins to him, that I can come to Jesus with my feelings and carry my negative feelings to him, and he can help me. He helps me not to remain the same. Thank you that when I have hatred in my thoughts and I bring this to Jesus, he helps me to give to other people. Thank you that when I come to Jesus with anxiety, Jesus helps me to be released from anxiety and gives me hope. I ask you to help me to follow God’s standard, not the standard in this world, and to find comfort not in this world but in Jesus. I ask you that Jesus change my actions and that he gives me the desire to help people, not to hurt them. Amen.
- Jesus, I am grateful that you are helping me to change my angry feelings that I have toward others. I ask for your forgiveness in the ways that I fall short. I praise you for being the only one who can change my heart.
- Lord, I’ve been feeling more hope in this situation in Ukraine, but it grieves my heart to hear the realities of how this situation has destroyed people’s lives. When I see this, I don’t feel love for the people who have done this, and I need you to help me to understand how much they need you.

Romans 6:2-13

² ... We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be finished and made powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin... ¹² Therefore do not let sin rule over your body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

К Римлянам 6:2-13

² Мы умерли для греха: как же нам жить в нем? ³ Неужели не знаете, что все мы, крестившиеся во Христа Иисуса, в смерть Его крестились? ⁴ Итак мы погреблись с Ним крещением в смерть, дабы, как Христос воскрес из мертвых славою Отца, так и нам ходить в обновленной жизни. ⁵ Ибо если мы соединены с Ним подобием смерти Его, то должны быть [соединены] и [подобием] воскресения, ⁶ зная то, что ветхий наш человек распят с Ним, чтобы упразднено было тело греховное, дабы нам не быть уже рабами греху; ⁷ ибо умерший освобожден от греха... ¹² Итак да не царствует грех в смертном вашем теле, чтобы вам повиноваться ему в похотях его; ¹³ и не предавайте членов ваших греху в орудия неправды, но представьте себя Богу, как оживших из мертвых, и члены ваши Богу в орудия праведности.

In your own words, describe the purpose and meaning of baptism. What promises do we receive? (Look at each verse.)

- We are baptized into Jesus's death. Jesus died for our sins, and it is important for us to be a part of and accept his sacrifice.
- When we go down into the water, our old life and sins are buried into death, and we are raised or resurrected as Christ was and brought into a new life. This is a symbol of us dying to sin and being raised into a new life.
- If we choose to be buried with Christ, putting our sin to death, and are baptized with him, then we can be sure that we will be raised with him just as he was raised. We are united with him, just as Jesus is united with the Father.
- We will no longer be a slave to sin but will be set free from sin. Sin no longer has power over our lives. We receive real power to overcome sin.
- Overcoming sin can take many years. It may not happen overnight.

Describe the differences between our old life before baptism and our new life. Share from your own life, if you have experienced this.

- Jesus removed fear in my life. Before I repented and was baptized, I had much fear – like I couldn't stay at home without the lights on. I had to turn on lights in each room. After that, I was set free completely.

- Lately, sins that I didn't even know I was allowing in my life, I am now more aware of them and their root causes. It's very humbling after 23 years of being a Christian, that I wasn't aware of them. Hearing the Gospel in a new and clearer way, I am able to recognize them now.
- After I came to Christ and was baptized, I stopped drinking to get drunk. But after some years, I began to drink alcohol again to get drunk. But again, after some years after that, I stopped drinking to get drunk. So sometimes, things change and come back. We are set free, but if we stop reading the Bible, praying, being with Christians in fellowship, our old nature can come back. We must keep these things under control until death. We are free but we need to be careful.
- My old life was filled with pride, competition, anger, unforgiveness and I used alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, social life, and even sexual sin to cope with my pain. I also stayed so busy with school and activities that I didn't have time to feel pain. I covered my pain with many other things than with Jesus and his Word. After I was baptized, I was miraculously set free from the obvious sins, but from time to time struggled with forms of impurity and sins of the heart – pride, selfishness, lack of love. I can honestly say that today, I have overcome the sins of the flesh and have grown in my love for people. But I still struggle with pride, fear, and staying too busy to feel sometimes.

What do you think we should understand before we are baptized? What responsibilities do we have?

- We need to know who Jesus is and what he has done for us.
- We need to understand the spiritual meaning of baptism. Some people do not take it as seriously as they should.
- We need to understand our sinful nature. We need to know what sin is and what we are dying to, what we are burying.
- This is a contract between me and God – that I am God's child. But I sign the contract too – that I am choosing God and agreeing that I want my sins to be powerless in my life. I know now that God lives in me. I am no longer living for myself but for God because he is in me now!
- We have to understand what Jesus is calling us to in this new life and agree to how he is asking us to respond.

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of what happened at your baptism. If you have not been baptized in this way and you want to be, write a prayer statement of the hope you will receive if you are baptized in Jesus's name!

- Lord, thank you for your death, your forgiveness, and your victory over sin and evil. Right now, this is important. Before your death, you struggled with sweat of blood. To overcome all the evil in this world - you've had victory over this! Now we see so much evil, so thank you for what you have done for us.
- When I went down into the water, my old nature died. When I was raised up, a new me was formed. Thank you for removing my sins through your blood. Thank you for giving me a new and eternal life!
- Jesus, your promises of baptism have changed my life to give me an opportunity to die to sin and be raised to life in you. I am no longer enslaved by sin, but I have been forgiven and redeemed. I need your covering.

I Peter 3:18-4:11

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, his righteousness for your unrighteousness, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. ¹⁹After being made alive, he went and even told the message to those who were in prison below the earth— ²⁰to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from your body but your request that God would awaken your mind to what is morally good. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers under him.

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, equip yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. ²As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. ³For you have spent enough time in the past doing what unbelievers choose to do—living in impurity, worldly desires, drunkenness, and wild parties; living for fun and anything other than God; and worshipping idols. ⁴They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they abuse you and insult you. ⁵But they will have to explain their actions to God, who is ready to judge the living and the dead...

⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore, be clear-minded and calm, not drunk or distracted, so that you may pray. ⁸Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over many sins. ⁹Invite one another into your homes and eat together without grumbling. ¹⁰Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful managers of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ...

1-е Петра 3:18-4:11

¹⁸потому что и Христос, чтобы привести нас к Богу, однажды пострадал за грехи наши, праведник за неправедных, быв умерщвлен по плоти, но ожив духом, ¹⁹которым Он и находящимся в темнице духам, сойдя, проповедал, ²⁰некогда непокорным ожидавшему их Божию долготерпению, во дни Ноя, во время строения ковчега, в котором немногие, то есть восемь душ, спаслись от воды. ²¹Так и нас ныне подобное сему образу крещение, не плотской нечистоты омытие, но обещание Богу доброй совести, спасает воскресением Иисуса Христа, ²²Который, восшед на небо, пребывает одесную Бога и Которому покорились Ангелы и Власти и Силы.

4 Итак, как Христос пострадал за нас плотию, то и вы вооружитесь тою же мыслью; ибо страдающий плотию перестает грешить, ²чтобы остальное во плоти время жить уже не по человеческим похотям, но по воле Божией. ³Ибо довольно, что вы в прошедшее время жизни поступали по воле языческой, предаваясь нечистотам, похотям (мужеложству, скотоложству, помыслам), пьянству, излишеству в пище и питии и нелепому идолослужению; ⁴почему

они и дивятся, что вы не участвуете с ними в том же распутстве, и злословят вас. ⁵ Они дадут ответ Имеющему вскоре судить живых и мертвых...

⁷ Впрочем близок всему конец. Итак будьте благоразумны и бодрствуйте в молитвах. ⁸ Более же всего имейте усердную любовь друг ко другу, потому что любовь покрывает множество грехов. ⁹ Будьте страннолюбивы друг ко другу без ропота. ¹⁰ Служите друг другу, каждый тем даром, какой получил, как добрые домостроители многообразной благодати Божией. ¹¹ Говорит ли кто, [говори] как слова Божии; служит ли кто, [служи] по силе, какую дает Бог, дабы во всем прославлялся Бог через Иисуса Христа, Которому слава и держава во веки веков. Аминь.

We see here again that the purpose of baptism is to save us from a life devoted to sin. Many of us know some basic sins, such as “do not murder or steal”. What are other examples of sin (v.3)? (See also Appendix B in the [TalkEnglish](#) workbook, for ideas.)

- living in impurity
- worldly desires
- drunkenness and drugs
- wild parties
- living for fun and anything other than God
- worshipping idols (money, things, job, spouse, children...)
- gluttony (using food beyond what it is designed for, which is for survival. It can become an idol.)
- laziness, wasting time
- being mean, hurting others
- hatred
- lying, deceit, propaganda
- pride (an attitude when we feel we are better than others, we look down on others, wanting to be first, wanting attention)
- selfishness
- anger
- unforgiveness
- boasting, gloating – be happy when something bad happens to your enemy, when you win and others lose, being competitive
- unbelief, lack of faith or trust in Christ (faith opens the door)
- anything that is not love or out of love or faith is sin

Peter gives us ideas in verses 7-11 of how to live for God instead of living for sin. What are some of these ideas?

- Be clear-minded and calm, not drunk or distracted, so that you may pray.
- Love each other deeply because love covers over many sins
- Invite one another into your homes and eat together without grumbling
- Use whatever gift you have received to serve others
- Be faithful managers of God’s grace in its various forms
- Share the Gospel
- Do these things so that Jesus is glorified and honored

Jesus gives each one of us special gifts and talents to use for his glory. What are some of your gifts and talents that you can use to bring glory to the name of Jesus?

- Bible interpretation, preaching, English
- Bible interpretation, missions, finance, art, choreography, leadership/serving others
- Managing projects or managing people
- Encouraging others
- Teaching others, including the Bible
- Accounting and finances
- Analysis, especially numbers
- Listening
- Musical talent – recognizing tunes and kinds of music
- Savings, money management

What can you start doing this week to be like Jesus to the people around you who are also suffering? *(We didn't have time to answer this question.)*

Write a prayer statement of things you want to stop doing out of your love for Jesus and things you want to start doing to live for him!

- Lord, I want to stop worrying about what others are doing or thinking and start reaching out to them to encourage and strengthen them.
- Lord, I want to be open to people and do something for them.
- Lord, I want to stop hating and start forgiving the way that you forgive.
- Lord, I want to stop hatred and pride and start encouraging and serving others.
- Lord, I want to stop judging others and be more patient with them.

Time of prayer

Go to the next page.

Lesson 2

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

Hebrews 10:11-25

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made a resting place for his feet. ¹⁴ For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. ¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First, he says: ¹⁶ "...I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." ¹⁷ Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." ¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter God's holy temple by the blood of Jesus... ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold on to the hope we profess with unchanging commitment, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may motivate one another toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another all the more as you see the Day approaching.

К Евреям 10:11-25

¹¹ И всякий священник ежедневно стоит в служении, и многократно приносит одни и те же жертвы, которые никогда не могут истребить грехов. ¹² Он же, принеся одну жертву за грехи, навсегда воссел одесную Бога, ¹³ ожидая затем, доколе враги Его будут положены в подножие ног Его. ¹⁴ Ибо Он одним приношением навсегда сделал совершенными освящаемых. ¹⁵ [О сем] свидетельствует нам и Дух Святой; ибо сказано: ¹⁶ Вот завет, который завещаю им после тех дней, говорит Господь: вложу законы Мои в сердца их, и в мыслях их напишу их, ¹⁷ и грехов их и беззаконий их не вспомяну более. ¹⁸ А где прощение грехов, там не нужно приношение за них. ¹⁹ Итак, братия, имея дерзновение входить во святилище посредством Крови Иисуса Христа, путем новым и живым, ²⁰ который Он вновь открыл нам через завесу, то есть плоть Свою, ²¹ и [имея] великого Священника над домом Божиим, ²² да приступаем с искренним сердцем, с полною верою, кроплением очистив сердца от порочной совести, и омыв тело водою чистою, ²³ будем держаться исповедания упования неуклонно, ибо верен Обещавший. ²⁴ Будем внимательны друг ко другу, поощряя к любви и добрым делам. ²⁵ Не будем оставлять собрания своего, как есть у некоторых обычай; но будем увещевать [друг друга], и тем более, чем более усматриваете приближение дня оногo.

In the first paragraph, what do we learn about the sacrifice that Jesus made for our sins? How does his sacrifice offer us confidence in our relationship with him?

- This is a sacrifice for all people.
- We receive forgiveness for our sins through Christ's blood
- This is a perfect sacrifice
- The animal sacrifices couldn't take away sins. They became routine. But Jesus's sacrifice was the final sacrifice to take away sins.
- Through this sacrifice, we are made perfect even while the Holy Spirit is making us holy and reminding us of the scriptures, transforming us to become more like Christ.
- We can know that we are saved. Even when we sin, even when we struggle, we are reminded that God has made us whole through Jesus's sacrifice.
- Romans 13 – Clothe ourselves with Jesus's blood. When God looks at us – we are sinful people who deserve death – but his blood transforms us into someone God wants to save and will pass over us when he pours out his wrath. If we remain in him, we will stay covered.

In this study, we learn that our faith in Jesus saves us by making us right with God, even though we are still sinners. But once we are saved, Jesus doesn't leave us in our sin. His full plan is to save us from the world, wash away our sins, and raise us into a new life. In verse 22, we see a promise given to us through our *faith* in Jesus, a sincere faith that leads us to our heart-felt *response* to turn away from our old life of sin and be baptized. What is that promise? (v. 22)

- Jesus's blood is in our hearts, so our soul is with Jesus. His blood cleanses our guilty conscience. He's changed our hearts.
- Through this faith, change of our heart, and baptism, we are given full assurance of our faith. It's a transformation that Jesus does in us, making us whole both inside and outside.
- God in the OT commanded the priests to sprinkle the altar and temple with blood. So, Jesus covers us with blood, and we no longer need this ongoing sprinkling. This foreshadowed what was to come through Jesus. It was a symbolic image.
- He cleanses us; this is not something we do ourselves.
- Knowing that he has cleansed my conscience, it helps me to walk out transformation. If my heart is responding to punishment, then I will change my behavior. But if I know that Jesus loves me and he has already changed me, then my heart changes. That change of heart changes my behavior genuinely. This is all by the Holy Spirit. The motivation is love and forgiveness, not punishment.

Because of this confidence, how does Jesus want us to live? (v. 23-25)

- Encourage one another – we are not designed to stay faithful alone. We need each other and we need encouragement. This also means that we are open with one another about what is happening in our minds, our lives, and our hearts – even our sins.
- Meet together regularly to encourage one another
- Stay in the Word, stay in prayers
- Trust in our hearts that he will help us and comfort us
- Stay focused on eternal life – knowing that when we die, we will be with him
- Growing in our relationship with Jesus – talking about our hearts and our needs and listening through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God

Are there any areas listed where you feel you are strong? Are there any areas where you need to grow?

- This war makes me feel anxiety. I can't sleep. The news talks about chemical weapons. Will I survive or not? It makes me quite nervous.
- I don't think we need to feel strong by ourselves. We are not called to be powerful or strong. If a man tries to do something by himself, then he fails. The Jewish people depended on the chief priests. But what if they died? We have a high priest who came one time. And we became priests because of Christ. So, we don't need to be strong. We need to rely on Jesus's power through us and through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us revelation. My strength is holding on to God's Word in a genuine way – through my heart, not just my mind. It's not a legalistic thing, but holding onto Jesus in a real way.
- I need to trust him more because I am worried about many things. I remember that in my past, Jesus helped me. He knows everything that has happened in my life. He led me in the past, so why should I worry now?
- I am better at facing big challenges than little ones. Like with COVID, I chose to trust God with confidence, trusting that I would not die. I know that if it is not for God, no medicine could help. But if I have a headache, I will take medicine and don't even pray. I do this because there is something that I can do. In the war, I realized that if it is not for God's angels, no one can protect me. So, I decided to trust. I experience this when I have nothing else to rely on but God. In this way, I feel strong. If I can do something about a situation, I worry more and depend on myself more.
- My weakness is physical pain – wanting immediate relief and feeling anxious during physical pain. My strength is commitment to times with Jesus in the Word and prayer in a very genuine way.

Why do you think these areas are important during this time of suffering?

Write a prayer statement that reminds you of the confidence you have in your relationship with Jesus. Pray for other believers that you want to encourage this week. Share with the Lord any decisions you've made about meeting regularly with other believers.

Time of prayer

Go to the next page.

Lesson 3

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

Colossians 3:1-17

3 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, hatred, meanness, insults, gossip, and bad language from your lips. ⁹Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self... ¹⁰and have put on the new self, which is being made new in knowledge according to the way God sees things...

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Persevere with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a problem with someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these clothes, put on love, which binds everything in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the message of Christ richly come from your heart as you teach and caution one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

К Колоссянам 3:1-17

3 Итак, если вы воскресли со Христом, то ищите горнего, где Христос сидит одесную Бога; ²о горнем помышляйте, а не о земном. ³Ибо вы умерли, и жизнь ваша сокрыта со Христом в Боге. ⁴Когда же явится Христос, жизнь ваша, тогда и вы явитесь с Ним во славе. ⁵Итак, умертвите земные члены ваши: блуд, нечистоту, страсть, злую похоть и любостяжание, которое есть идолослужение, ⁶за которые гнев Божий грядет на сынов противления, ⁷в которых и вы некогда обращались, когда жили между ними. ⁸А теперь вы отложите все: гнев, ярость, злобу, злоречие, сквернословие уст ваших; ⁹не говорите лжи друг другу, совлекшись ветхого человека с делами его ¹⁰и облекшись в нового, который обновляется в познании по образу Создавшего его, ¹¹где нет ни Елина, ни Иудея, ни обрезания, ни необрезания, варвара, Скифа, раба, свободного, но все и во всем Христос. ¹²Итак облекитесь, как избранные Божии, святые и возлюбленные, в милосердие, благость, смиренномудрие, кротость, долготерпение, ¹³снисходя друг другу и прощая взаимно, если кто на кого имеет жалобу: как Христос простил вас, так и вы. ¹⁴Более же всего [облекитесь] в любовь, которая есть совокупность совершенства. ¹⁵И да владычествует в сердцах ваших мир Божий, к которому вы и призваны в одном теле, и будьте дружелюбны. ¹⁶Слово Христово да вселяется в вас обильно, со всякою премудростью; научайте и вразумляйте друг друга псалмами, славословием и духовными песнями, во благодати воспевая в сердцах

ваших Господу. ¹⁷ И всё, что вы делаете, словом или делом, всё [делайте] во имя Господа Иисуса Христа, благодаря через Него Бога и Отца.

Colossians 3 is a beautiful passage describing the old life and new life we have in Christ. Create a list of how Paul describes our life before finding true faith in Christ and the life we should strive to live after putting our trust in him.

Before:

- sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry
- anger, rage, hatred, meanness, insults, gossip, and bad language from your lips
- lying

After:

- compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience
- Persevere with each other and forgive one another if any of you have a problem with someone, have patience, give grace for them, don't give up them, bear with one another, endure relationally, keep trying
- Be clothed in love – love is the answer. Love fixes many issues!
- Give thanks to God, worship Him, living for God and not for ourselves
- Have peace in our hearts and be peaceful toward others – a spirit of unity
- The message of Christ is the center of what we teach and share with each other. We admonish and encourage with the message of Christ. What would Jesus do?

Look at the two paragraphs and share ways where you have been growing and where you still need to grow.

- I feel like I've been growing in my anxiety – turning to Jesus more in prayer and trust rather than fear but I want to grow in gentleness, love, and humility.
- I am growing in my ability to handle my anger, but I still want to grow in forgiveness when others cause me to feel anger. Anger is my own sin but when others do things I don't like, my reaction is anger.
- I need to grow in forgiveness – I rehearse the situation over and over again like a video. It's difficult to move completely over the situation. With the bombing, I have been emotionally hurt by the situation. I was thinking constantly about this terrible situation, and I'm not completely healed. I want to trust in God more.
- I need to grow in all these areas. I have been growing in humility and patience. Before I was a Christian, I struggled with depression. I need healing for our bodies and our souls.
- I've been growing in compassion and patience. This comes as we become elderly.
- I want to be able to hold back my anger and rage. I am growing in it before the war, but now I need to grow again. I don't want the sun go down while I am angry or that my anger leads to a conflict with people. I want to grow in patience and not sin in my anger – words and actions.

How do you think the areas in second paragraph can encourage you and others during times of suffering? Talk about specific people or situations where you can encourage others this week.

- I want to share the message of Christ with my dad. We've had a difficult relationship.
- I have been praying with two people almost every day because of the war. It helped me a lot.

- I want to encourage one of my sisters. It's hard for me to have a relationship with her because she has a toxic personality. She's had a hard time this last 6 months. I've only reached out to her through text. I want to call her and see how she is doing.
- I want to love all of you, encourage you, and pray for you. We are staying in my mother's apartment, and I want to encourage her. Sometimes she is worrying about something. I know that I can do it if the Holy Spirit does it through me.
- I am thinking about texting my parents because we haven't spoken since the war started. So, I want to text them, and we will see what God will do.

Write a prayer statement that praises Jesus for areas where you've been growing and confesses to Jesus the areas where you want to grow.

Time of prayer

Lesson 4

(Answers are provided by Ukrainians and other attendees.)

II Corinthians 5:14-21

¹⁴ For Christ's love motivates us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ¹⁶ So from now on we see no one in the way that the world sees people. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who sent Christ to make peace between us and God, and he gave us the ministry of helping others to make peace with God, ¹⁹ ... not counting people's sins against them. And he has put inside us this message of how to make peace with God. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were encouraging and calling people to him through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ: Make peace with God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2-е Коринфянам 5:14-21

¹⁴ Ибо любовь Христова объемлет нас, рассуждающих так: если один умер за всех, то все умерли. ¹⁵ А Христос за всех умер, чтобы живущие уже не для себя жили, но для умершего за них и воскресшего. ¹⁶ Потому отныне мы никого не знаем по плоти; если же и знали Христа по плоти, то ныне уже не знаем. ¹⁷ Итак, кто во Христе, [тот] новая тварь; древнее прошло, теперь все новое. ¹⁸ Все же от Бога, Иисусом Христом примирившего нас с Собою и давшего нам служение примирения, ¹⁹ потому что Бог во Христе примирил с Собою мир, не вменяя [людям] преступлений их, и дал нам слово примирения. ²⁰ Итак мы--посланники от имени Христова, и как бы Сам Бог увещевает через нас; от имени Христова просим: примиритесь с Богом. ²¹ Ибо не знавшего греха Он сделал для нас [жертвою за] грех, чтобы мы в Нем сделали праведными пред Богом.

Paul reminds us again that we are a new creation because of Jesus's sacrifice for us. For this reason, what does God want us to do? (v.18-20)

- Love others
- Help others to make peace with God
- Become the righteousness of God / become Christ's ambassadors (representatives)

Considering what you have been learning for the past few weeks. How would you explain the message of Jesus to others?

- The message of Christ is to love each other just as Christ has loved you. We follow his commandments and teachings which he embodied and gave us a divine example.
- Treat others the way we want others to treat us.
- We can come to Christ just as we are. We talk about our feelings and our sins, and we come to him with all of that. His blood and love will cleanse you and heals us. He doesn't want us to stay as we are, not wait until we clean everything in our lives. He will help us.
- Jesus brought the idea of the heavenly Father. The Pharisees told people that God wanted to punish them, and that he was far away, but Jesus teaches us that God is a Father who takes care of us, including our health. God is not just someone we should revere, but we can trust him. Jesus showed us the nature of God and His Spirit. When we come to the cross, we don't need to be crucified, but we receive a new nature, a loving and faithful, forgiving nature. Everything that was in Christ, we have. We receive the fruits of the Spirit.

Reread verse 16. How does the world see people? How should we see people differently when we have put our faith and hope in Jesus? Consider both believers and non-believers.

- Forgiveness is found through understanding people – why they behave the way they behave.
- People in Ukraine are nervous, anxious, and depressed, so we need to be nicer to people, understand them, and more helpful. They can be in a bad mood.
- My mother was a very broken woman – her father was an alcoholic, and she was not loved by her parents. So, knowing this makes me feel more compassion and love.
- In the world, when they look at other people, they think what advantage they can take from someone. They don't even realize it, but they build relationships based on what they can get from them. The world is selfish. The world wants to use each other. But when we come to Christ, we are supposed to love people and serve them. God wants us to give, not just to take.
- We have to persevere with people who are lost.
- We have a tendency to see believers as someone who is a pure creation, blameless – someone who would do whatever we ask. We have high expectations. Sometimes it doesn't work. So, we can be critical.
- True believers are small in this world. They should be kind, generous, not critical, not judgmental or bad habits. They have good qualities and some bad qualities – are they truly believers?
- We are all a work-in-progress. I want to have these qualities. I strive and desire these things. But I still fall short. It doesn't always happen this way. We are still sinful.
- We have to be patient with one another, confess our sins to each other, take responsibility for our part, repent, apologize, and move toward goodness, service, and love, showing ourselves to be Christ's followers.

TalkEnglish

- Our role as brothers and sisters (our family is the family of Jesus) is to encourage one another, share scriptures, resolve conflicts, show love, and pray one for another.

How does sharing the message of Jesus with others bring joy to them during times of suffering?

- Right now, in Ukraine, people are struggling with anxiety, but only God can give us supernatural peace. He is the only one who can provide true hope in this life and in the next life.
- During times of suffering, almost everyone comes to God, or he tries to find a person who to encourage him – someone to serve them, love them, and encourage them. Everyone is looking for love and support.
- I think that people who are emotionally suffering will be refreshed when they hear how much Jesus loves them, was willing to die for them, wants to carry their suffering, support them, encourage them, and strengthen them.
- It's interesting when we share the Gospel with different people. Some look like they have suffering, and they share it with you. Others don't show it, so they don't want to know about God. Maybe they are completely satisfied and don't see their need. People who are well don't need a doctor, but only people who are sick. These are the people who find Jesus. He also says blessed are those who are poor in spirit – they are not satisfied with life on this earth. They realize they are missing something.
- We can present Jesus as the one who can help them, or you can prove to people that they are sinners. If they don't know this, they will go to hell after they die. They still need help – they may not see that in this life. They need to know that they need Jesus.
- We can share from our lives – our sin, and how we didn't see our need. We can ask them about their soul, and what will they do about their sin? How will they receive forgiveness for something that is impossible to overcome by ourselves?

How does sharing the message of Jesus with others bring *you* joy when you are experiencing suffering? What challenges might we face?

- Many people are depressed here. They are disappointed with the situation. Some people just believe in prosperity, so this time is very difficult. Others are focused on the end of the world, so they can accept this situation better.
- When I encourage other people, I myself feel encouraged. Whenever you help other people – maybe we are created like God in this way – we feel joy, especially if we are not forced to give, but it is from our hearts. I saw a homeless person digging in the trash. A woman coming out of the grocery store, she gave him money. And I thought, "She must be happy at this moment!" When we share the Gospel, it must be the biggest joy, especially if they receive Christ.
- There are believers that are very scared now. I remind myself that Christ asked, "Where is my faith?" Do we have faith? Are we just in unbelief? The news is trying to create faith, saying, "Everything is going to be alright." If we don't believe, then we might begin staggering and failing in our actions to defend Ukraine – military and civilians. But if we are captured, where is our faith?
- Do we view war through the eyes of Jesus or through the world's eyes.

Think of people you know who are grieving through this time of suffering and need the hope of Jesus Christ or the encouragement of Christ's love. Write down their names so that you can pray

TalkEnglish

for them. If you are comfortable, please share about their situation. *(For privacy, names and situations are not recorded.)*

Is there anyone you know who might be interested in hearing these studies or other Bible studies? If you are able, meet with your friends personally to go through the studies together. If you are not able to meet, you can also encourage your friends to read these studies online, and you can talk about what you both learned. Take a minute to share about the friends who came to your mind. *(For privacy, names and situations are not recorded.)*

Write a prayer statement for the friends you know who need this message of peace with God and ask God to open the doors of their hearts. *(For privacy, names and situations are not recorded.)*

Time of Prayer