

sent from
HEAVEN

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with ornate scrollwork and a central downward-pointing element.



LIVING HOPE

baptist church

*Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who according to
His abundant mercy
has begotten us again to a
Living Hope
through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead.*

1 Peter 1:3

Community Group Purpose Statement

We, as smaller gatherings of one family, will practice with our lives the gospel truths that we confess with our mouths. Together, we will allow our lives to be challenged by the gospel and one another; we will live lives of boldness and purpose. As we walk in the light of the gospel, we will point to the grace of God and its power to set lives free from sin and death. We will continue praying, teaching, making disciples, and bearing one another's burdens. Following the pattern set before us by Jesus, we will bring joy to our family (the church) and glory to his name.

What is a Community Group?

Community groups are small gatherings of people that meet regularly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears. Community groups are an essential expression of the mission of Living Hope Baptist Church. They're a place where we learn more about Jesus and life together. They're the place where we wrestle with the truths of the Bible and encourage one another toward the life that God intends for us.

Each community group is unique, shaped by its neighborhood and the people who attend. However, you can expect a weekly gathering in a residence that involves food, conversation, prayer, discussion for applying the Bible to practical living, and service in the neighborhood. At the heart of each community group is the desire to see an authentic community marked by love for Jesus, one another, and the neighborhood.

Why Should I Join a Community Group?

The God of the Bible is a Trinitarian God who is one and three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. God has made us in his image, which means we are made for community and friendship. And when we are not living in community we suffer because life in a sinful world is too complex and tempting to journey alone. Therefore, community groups are a place where we can live in relationship with one another through the ups and downs of life.

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Sent from Heaven

INTRODUCTION

For many people, the Christmas season is their favorite. The uplifting music, the lights that begin to show up all over town, the family gatherings, the memories of Christmas past, the joy of giving, the appreciation of receiving gifts, the Christmas programs in churches and schools, and the general overall spirit of joy and hope.

Christmas is also a great opportunity to reflect on the One who was sent from Heaven. In the Gospel of John alone, Jesus mentioned that He was sent from heaven some 40 different times. It seems that Jesus wanted us to know the significance of the truth that He came from His Father. Because He came from His Father, He alone is the hope of mankind.

This Christmas season we will be examining the One sent from heaven. It is the most beautiful story of all time and it is the most needed story of all time. While Christmas is the favorite season of many, there are many who don't know the One sent from heaven. They enjoy the lights, the music, the festive spirit, the family gatherings, and the giving and receiving of gifts, yet they are in the dark with no real hope and no real joy.

May this study draw those of us who have received God's grace to a closer walk and love for Jesus and a deeper burden for those who remain in darkness. May the Sent One change us and use us to be a part of seeing others change for God's glory. Have a blessed Christmas season as we focus on the One sent from heaven.

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me." **John 8:42**

CHAPTER ONE

Sent from Heaven

SUMMARY

This lesson is designed to trace through God's word prophecies of the One who was promised to be sent, and to show that Jesus is the promised One sent from the Father. No one else can take His place because no one else was sent by the Father to be the redeemer of mankind. *"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* **Acts 4:12**

OBSERVATION

1. Read Micah 5:2. Jesus is promised to be born in Bethlehem, but what does this verse say about where He came from?

2. Read John 3:31. Where did Jesus come from according to this verse? Did he have his start in Bethlehem?

3. Read Colossians 1:16,17. What did Jesus do in the past and what is He still doing today?

4. Read Genesis 3:15. What will the promised One from the seed of the woman accomplish? (See **Galatians 4:4** also)

5. How does Galatians 3:8,18,29 show that Jesus is the promise that was given to Abraham in **Genesis 15:5,6**?

6. How does **Revelation 5:5** show that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of Jacob's blessing to his son Judah in **Genesis 49:10**? (See also **Numbers 24:17**)

7. Read 2 Samuel 7:13,16. What did God promise David's descendants and how does **Luke 1:31-33** show that this is fulfilled in Jesus?

8. Read Isaiah 53:7,8. How does **Acts 8:26-35** show that Isaiah was speaking of Jesus?

9. Read Psalm 16:10. How does Peter clarify that the Psalmist is speaking of Jesus in **Acts 2:25-31**?

10. According to Jesus words in **Luke 24:27**, the Scriptures are all about what person? (This person could only be the "Sent One")

APPLICATION

1. As you have observed the Father's promise to give His Son and then to fulfill that promise in His power and love, what encouragement does that give you concerning His promises and His love to you?

2. Do you think Jesus is one person you would be able to trust with your life today and for all eternity? Is it easier for you to trust Jesus with your eternal life than it is in your day to day life here on earth? Explain

3. Jesus said that all Scripture is about Him. By way of implication, all life is to be about Him. He is to be personally involved in every area of our lives. Is there a room in your life where you have not let Him in to control? Where do you struggle with letting the Sent One be master of your life?

This can be very difficult to share with your group, but you are encouraged to share so that others may pray for you – you just might realize that others struggle in the same area as you do.

4. What is the end result for those who reject the Sent One for a substitute? Can you think of any Scripture to prove your answer?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER TWO

Sent as the Light

SUMMARY

All through Scripture we see a contrast between light and darkness. Light refers to truth, holiness, purity, and life eternal while darkness refers to sin, falsehood, rebellion, blindness, and has a special connection to the prince of darkness, the devil. God sent His Son as the light of the world to deliver people from darkness and sin. Without the Light, there is no Life!

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

John 8:12

OBSERVATION

1. Who is the source of light in **Genesis 1:3**? What was not made yet? (See **Genesis 1:14-18**.)
2. According to **Isaiah 60:19,20**, who will be the source of Light in the New Jerusalem? What kind of light is it? (See also **Rev. 21:23,24**)
3. In **Luke 1:78,79**, who visited the earth, where did he come from, and what was his ministry among men?
4. In **John 1:9**, who was coming into the world? How is the light described in this verse?

5. Read John 3:19. What was the response by the world in relation to the light, and why did they respond that way?

6. Read John 8:12. What is the promise in this verse? What contrast do you see in this verse? Why would Jesus use the word “follow” rather than just believe?

7. Read 2 Corinthians 4:3-6. Answer the following questions:

(3) Who can't see the gospel?

(4) Who has blinded their minds and what does he blind them from seeing?

(5) Who is to be proclaimed?

(6) How is salvation described in this verse?

(5,6) Why must these two verses go together?

APPLICATION

1. As you think about the previous question and the hopeless state of darkness that you were in and that God spoke light to you so that you would embrace the Gospel, what thoughts fill your heart?

2. Why is darkness a good way to describe a person who has rejected Jesus as the light? How would you describe your life in darkness before God shined the light of his son into your life?

3. How would you know that you love something that would be labeled darkness according to God? In other words, what would that look like? (Note: Salvation is embracing the Light, but love for darkness can creep in and try to take a place again, even after we are saved)

4. How do you view those who are lost? How should you view them? Does a critical and judgmental spirit ever show itself as you observe sinners?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER THREE

Sent as the Bread

SUMMARY

So many focus on temporal needs and become consumed with these. They seek them and put their hope and trust in them. While some temporary needs are important such as food and water, they are not more important than that which provides for all eternity. Jesus identified himself as the bread of life, the true bread from heaven, the living bread, and the bread that gives life to the world.

OBSERVATION

1. What does Jesus expose about the hearts of those following him in **John 6:26**? What were they most concerned about?
2. In **John 6:27**, who is the “food that endures to eternal life”? What two things is Jesus contrasting here in this verse?
3. According to **John 6:27**, who is the only one that God the Father has set his approval on to give eternal life?
4. What is the work God desires from people? See **John 6:29**.
5. What has the crowd forgotten based on the question they asked Jesus in **verse 30**? (See **John 6:9-13**)

6. Who gave the manna in the wilderness and who gave Jesus? See **John 6:32**.

7. In **John 6:33-35**, who claims to be the bread of life and what does the bread of life promise to give to those who receive him?

8. In **John 6:51**, how do Jesus's words predict his coming death?

9. What danger do you see for people as you read **John 6:58**?

10. How does Peter show that Jesus is the only Sent One from heaven that God approves for eternal life? See **John 6:66-69**.

APPLICATION

1. In what ways can you seek God for a supposed personal benefit rather than seeking him because he is worthy? In what ways have you observed yourself doing this?

2. If you are seeking God for a personal benefit, what system of “religion” are you living by?

3. Can you name something in your life, that if God were to take it away, that you believe you could not go on? Is it tempting to find your ultimate satisfaction in God’s provisions rather than on God himself?

4. **Read John 6:66.** Is there anything in your life that you struggle with related to God’s truth? Why might you be struggling with it? What is the answer to any struggles we might have with God’s truth?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER FOUR

Sent as the Peace

SUMMARY

Many in our city would give up everything to just have peace. Their lives are in turmoil and they live in fear from day to day. Their minds are unsettled and troubled. Sadly, they look for peace in every place where it is not. From time to time they find a temporary false peace, but soon revert back to their worrisome ways. Little do they know that this peace they so desperately desire will never be found in things, or in everything going their way, or in being able to control every situation. True peace is found in a person and he is the Sent One from heaven. He and he alone can bring a person who is removed from God to a good standing with God through his sacrifice for sins. He and he alone can take over our lives as the sovereign master and give peace on a day to day basis. Peace with God, peace for eternity, and peace every day comes from the Sent One, Jesus.

“God has not made this world to be a nest for us, and if we try to make it such for ourselves, he plants thorns in it, so that we may be compelled to mount and find our soul’s true home somewhere else, in a higher and nobler sphere than this poor world can give.” **Charles Spurgeon**

OBSERVATION

1. What title is Jesus given in **Isaiah 9:6** related to peace? What significance does the title “Peace” have in comparison to all other leaders of governments. See also **Isaiah 9:7**.

2. Read Isaiah 53:5. What act of Jesus is described here and what does it bring to those who belong to him?

3. **Read Romans 3:17** and also **Luke 1:79**. What do the wicked not have and what can only Jesus give?

4. As the angels sang to the shepherds in **Luke 2:14**, what will those on earth receive from the Sent One who He is pleased in?

5. **Read Acts 10:36**. What is the peace called in this verse and who is it through?

6. **Read Romans 5:1,2**. What three blessings do you see in these verses that come from the Sent One to those who have received Him and have been justified?

7. **Read John 14:27**. How does this verse tell us there is a false or temporary peace that people can receive?

8. Is there anything in this life or the life to come where God is insufficient to provide peace? See **2 Thessalonians 3:16**.

APPLICATION

1. Do you truly rest in your standing of peace with God or do you struggle with his acceptance of you in His Son?

2. Would you describe yourself as a person who tries to earn things from God by the things you do so that He will accept you and you then can have his peace? If so, explain.

4. What kind of peace does the world offer? Do you ever find yourself seeking peace in things or people other than in Jesus? Explain.

5. How does understanding that the lost are not at peace with God motivate you to witness. Does it help you to be more patient and gracious to the lost? Why?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER FIVE

Sent as the Shepherd

SUMMARY

Throughout the entire Bible God used the imagery of the Shepherd and the sheep to describe His relationship to His people and His people's relationship to Himself. It is a very fitting picture as we see God lovingly leading, feeding and providing for His people. We also see the sheep failing to follow their Shepherd on many occasions. The ultimate expression of the Shepherd's love for His sheep is seen in the sacrifice of the Good Shepherd, Jesus, as He gave His life for the Sheep. This sacrifice and His resurrection guarantee eternal life and abundant life for His sheep.

OBSERVATION

1. Why did the blind man's parents refuse to answer the religious leader's question? See John 9:20-22
2. What Shepherding characteristic do you see Jesus display in John 9:35?
3. What three things are said of sheep in John 10:5 related to an imposter shepherd?
4. What is significant about Jesus calling Himself "the door" in John 10:7,9?
5. What reasons caused the hired hand to flee when danger came to the sheep? See John 10:12,13

6. What two characteristics are seen in God's sheep in John 10:4

7. How does the true Shepherd prove his love for the sheep? See John 10:11,15,17,18 (same phrase is repeated)

APPLICATION

1. Can you name some thing(s) in your lifetime that you got so involved in that it became to you a "shepherd"? In other words, you ordered your life around it, you made decisions based on that thing, you may have even sacrificed for it, and it may have taken the place of Jesus as the true Shepherd? (This doesn't necessarily have to be something "evil")

2. Who has God put in our life to shepherd and in what ways can you be a shepherd to those God has put in your lives?

3. Have you been or are you now in a place where you question or struggle with the shepherding ministry of Jesus in your life? What can you do to encourage your heart to trust in God's shepherding ability?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER SIX

Sent as the King

SUMMARY

In our culture it is difficult for us to understand the role of a king. In Israel, the king had authority to rule over the nation. We have seen in the history of our world that when one man came to great power over a people, it was usually an evil power and resulted in great suffering and eventual destruction. Jesus came to be born as the King of the Jews (**Matt. 2:2**). This lesson will examine the Kingship of Jesus and how that impacts our lives as His people.

OBSERVATION

- 1. Read John 18:37.** What did Jesus specifically say he was born to be?

- 2. As you read John 6:15,** what do you observe Jesus resisting?

- 3. Where is Jesus kingship according to John 18:36** and where did it not come from?

- 4. Did Jesus have a kingdom? See Matthew 4:17,23.**

- 5. Read Luke 19:38-40.** Why did Jesus not rebuke the disciples and the crowd from calling Him King?

- 6. Read Revelation 19:16.** On this future date, what acknowledgment will Jesus receive?

APPLICATION

1. The subjects of an earthly king were required to submit to every desire and every decision that proceeded from his throne of authority. Is there any area in your life where you know Christ is not residing as King? Is there a room you have not allowed Him to enter? Here is a list to get you thinking.

- As a Husband
- As a Wife
- As a Parent
- As a Child
- As a Church Member
- As a Servant
- As a Giver
- As an Employee
- Finances
- Schedule (Busyness)
- Your Physical Body
- Other
- Other
- Other

2. Knowing that King Jesus is returning to set up His rightful throne and to judge those who have rejected Him, how does His kingship motivate you to tell others so that they may also be a part of His Kingdom? (See **Matt. 25:31-46**)

3. In what ways can you, as a child of God, be like King Jesus, as related to His kingly position? What areas of leadership and authority has God placed in your hands and how are you doing leading in the ways of God?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER SEVEN

Sent as the Rescuer

SUMMARY

Man, by virtue of his sin, is doomed to eternal separation from God. Sin has caused this separation and eternal death is the guaranteed result. When Adam sinned, sin and death passed to every single person without exception. God's eternal plan to redeem people is found only in His Son. Man was and is in need of a rescue, and the only Rescuer is Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to be the Rescuer of the world.

OBSERVATION

1. What title does **Luke 2:11** give to Jesus?
2. What does **1 John 4:14** say about who the sender is, and who He sent, and what He sent Him to do?
3. Read **Romans 3:9-18**. Why does man need a Rescuer?
4. Read **Hebrews 2:14**. What was absolutely necessary in order for Jesus to fulfill his role as the Rescuer?
5. Read **Acts 13:22,23**. What lineage did Jesus come from and what did God promise?

6. Read Acts 4:12. Are there more than one Savior?

7. List as many important truths as you can see found in **2 Timothy 1:9,10.**

APPLICATION

1. If you were to die today, are you sure that you stand before the Holy God forgiven and rescued by the One He sent, Jesus?

2. If you answered yes to question one, what is the assurance you have for such an answer?

3. If you answered no to question one, what do you believe God would have you do? (If you have any questions, this would be a great time to ask or seek out an elder or a believer)

4. How has God changed your life since He rescued you?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER EIGHT

Sent as the Judge

SUMMARY

The majority of people in our city probably believe in a baby named Jesus who was born on a day that we call Christmas. They go to Christmas programs and plays and musicals and observe the amazing story of the birth of Jesus. It is a beautiful story with angels, shepherds, wise men, a shining star of God's glory, a young couple chosen by God, and a birth in a lowly stable. It's the stuff of a great story or movie. However, for those who truly know the Savior who came, we understand that it is much more than a story. The baby Jesus was the Son of God and he would live and die and rise and leave and promise to come again. For many, he will come as their judge. It will be the worst day in history when Jesus says, "*Depart from me, I never knew you.*" The Sent One was sent to be the Judge.

OBSERVATION

1. Why did Jesus not come to condemn while he was here on earth? See **John 3:17,18**.

2. **Read Acts 10:42**. Who is the appointed one in this verse and what did he Father appoint him to do?

3. Who will Jesus judge as seen in **2 Timothy 4:1**?

4. What will the unbelieving do before Jesus in the future? See **1 Peter 4:5**.

5. What guarantees that Jesus is the appointed one by the Father to be the judge of the world? See **Acts 18:31**.

6. **Read 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10**. How would you describe Jesus the judge in these verses? Is this a judge that should be feared? Why is he not feared? Do some like a Jesus that is caring and loving and forgiving but don't really care for this Jesus as described in these verses? (See also **Revelation 1:7**)

APPLICATION

1. As you look back over your life and are aware of the sins you have committed, what thoughts enter your mind as a believer, to know that Jesus will never judge you for those sins?

2. Knowing that Jesus was sent to eventually be the judge of all mankind and that all those who reject him will face him as their judge, what response should that bring to your heart?

3. When was the last time you personally told someone else about Jesus? Is this something that you need to work on in your life?

4. In what ways can you do a better job at being faithful to share the good news of Jesus to others?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

CHAPTER NINE

Sent as the Sender

SUMMARY

The Sent One completed His task in obedience to His Father and after His resurrection He ascended to the Father to take His Seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus is our great example. The Father sent Him into the world, and now He sends His followers out into the world to serve, sacrifice, and share the gospel message. The Sent One is also the Sender.

OBSERVATION

1. Read John 17:18. Summarize what Jesus said in your own words.

2. In Matthew 28: 19,20 Jesus assumes that His followers will be going out into the world. What are His followers commanded to do in these verses as they are going?

3. What is Jesus promise to His followers in Matthew 28:20?

4. Read Ephesians 4:11-14. What did Jesus give to His church and why did He give it?

5. Read Romans 12:6-8. What are the followers of Jesus called to do in these verses?

6. Read Matthew 9:36-38. What kind of heart should we have towards a hurting world and what should be a constant prayer request to God?

APPLICATION

1. What things seem to get in the way of serving Jesus and responding to His call to send us as His servants?

2. What are some distractions that prevent you from serving God?

3. What fears do you face when you think of stepping out and serving God?

4. Why is it so easy to forget that Jesus has sent us personally to serve Him and to so easily get wrapped up in mechanical busyness? What is the result of busyness without love for the One who Sent you?

5. Are there any areas that you personally struggle in and know you need to grow in when it comes to serving Jesus?

RESPONSE

In what specific way do my heart and my actions need to respond to the truths taught in this lesson?

PRAYER

Take what God has shown you in this lesson and enter His throne of grace with thanksgiving, confession, a plea for help, and a desire to grow and change.

NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

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