

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

NEW CITY CATECHISM



New City Catechism Part 2: Christ, Redemption, Grace (Weeks 27-29)

**Resurrection Sunday:
“These Are Written So
That You May Believe”
(John 20:1-10, 18, 24-31)**



Study Guide



firstchristian
CHURCH

HELPING PEOPLE FIND AND FOLLOW JESUS

This Study Guide is intended to help you meaningfully participate in a preaching series and gain a better handle on God's Word. For maximum utility, don't skip parenthetical references—all of Scripture is God's interconnected special revelation. Some of the best insights are often found in wrestling through the references. Following an introduction to the book, series, or sermon, each week contains:

- Sermon Title, Passage, and space for Sermon Notes
- Passage's Main Points: Exegetical Focus, Theological Principles, Redemptive-Historical Focus
- Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary (i.e., Scott's "Dad's Daily(ish) Devos," available at fccgreene.org/ddd.)
- Daily Bible Readings accompanying sermon themes.
- Life Group Discussion Guide: Summary and Questions¹
- Parent Pages/Kids Lessons. The L-E-A-D framework helps parents LEAD their children through God's Word in a simple, repeatable way that forms understanding, engagement, reflection, and lasting faith.
 - *Learn the Lesson* – Introduces the main truth of God's Word so children can understand what God has said (Deuteronomy 6:6; Nehemiah 8:8).
 - *Engage your Child* – Helps children interact with God's truth through shared activities and everyday conversations (Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6).
 - *Ask the Questions* – Encourages children to think carefully, respond personally, and grow in wisdom and discernment (Deuteronomy 6:20; Proverbs 2:1-5).
 - *Deposit the Word* – Focuses on storing God's Word in children's hearts through repetition and memory so it shapes their lives over time (Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 7:1-3; Colossians 3:16).

¹ We've done our best to plan sermon titles, passages, points, etc. but such synchronicity between plans and execution rarely happens perfectly. Main differences might be: (1) Passage's Main Points, which will at least be similar to eventual sermon points, and (2) Sermon Titles, which are planned thematically in the Series Guide but may be changed by the preacher, who chooses a representative phrase from the passage as the eventual title.

Additional Resources: Sermon Guide, Manuscript, Parents Pages (for Middle/High School), Podcast, Fridge Magnet

- Sun Sermon Guide/Manuscript are on the app under “Home” and at fccgreene.org/sermonguide. For additional study, Scott’s manuscripts typically have extensive footnotes.
- Parent Pages (for Kids and Middle/High School students) and the Worship Guide are on the app under “Study Guides” and at fccgreene.org/studyguides.
- The Weekly Bible Study Podcast, posted every Thursday, helps prepare for next Sun. Available on the app under “Watch” > “Media,” on YouTube (youtube.com/fccgreene), or fccgreene.org/wbsp.
- Don’t forget to pray with/for your church! 2026 Fridge Magnets available at The Hub and fccgreene.org/2026fridgemagnet.



Helping People Find and Follow Jesus

Praise God for His many blessings and pray He will move in power in our church in 2026!

SUN – Thank God for another great worship service! **Pray for opportunities** this week to preach the gospel, tell the story of God’s work in your life, and hand someone an Invite Card!

MON – Thank God for opportunities to grow! **Pray for our weekly ministries**—Life Groups, Re:gen, Marriage Ministry, Pillar YA, and 180 Students—that we will grow in grace. See you at Life Group!

TUE – Thank God for those who serve! **Pray for our elders, staff, missionaries, and for one another**—for God to strengthen and encourage us for Kingdom mission. Send a text of encouragement to someone today!

WED – Thank God for community partnerships and outreach opportunities! **Pray for our community and school outreaches** to create Kingdom fruit. Help out at your next campus-specific outreach!

THU – Thank God for His many blessings that sustain us even when life is hard! **Pray for generous hearts** that joyfully give to fuel gospel ministry and meet growing needs in every campus and ministry.

FRI – Thank God for His faithfulness in the past year! **Pray for God’s favor and guidance with emerging opportunities**—synced curriculum, Catalyst expansion, Colombian church plant, Residents preaching/serving, producing resources and training leaders, Admin/Ops Director, Jan 2027 Launch of 4th Campus

SAT – Thank God for a Perfect Savior! **Pray for God to use our singing, prayer, and preaching** to strengthen us for another week of gospel service. See ya there—don’t forget your Bible and Series Guide!

**Engage in Worship • Serve on the Team • Connect in a Small Group • Pray and Study the Bible
Pursue Generosity • Identify with Christ • Tell the Story**

Pillar Young Adults Breakouts

Pillar often syncs with Sunday mornings via this Study Guide. (Be done by 8:30p. When done, be respectful of groups still going).

- (1) How is everyone doing?
- (2) What stuck out from the text? Thoughts or questions?
- (3) What is one next step or takeaway for your life?
- (4) Pray for one another.

Table of Contents & Series Plan/Outline

(Re)Introduction to New City Catechism	4
Wk 27 – Mar 15, 2026 – “Are All People, Just As They Were Lost Through Adam, Saved Through Christ?” (Romans 5:17)	6
Wk 28 – Mar 22, 2026 – “What Happens After Death to Those Not United to Christ by Faith?” (John 3:16-18, 36)	13
Wk 29 – Mar 29, 2026 – “How Can We Be Saved?” (Ephesians 2:8-9)	19
Easter – Apr 5, 2026 – “These Are Written So That You May Believe” (John 20:1-10, 18, 24-31)	25

(Re)Introduction to New City Catechism

Catechism [kat-i-kiz-uhm], noun: “to teach by word of mouth.”

It’s a method to teach and learn Christian doctrines and beliefs in a Q&A format.

Way back in August of 2023, we started a Sermon series based on the New City Catechism. NCC is comprised of 52 questions and answers, one Q&A for each week of the year. Its 3 Parts are divided into key doctrinal headings that follow the main trajectory of Scripture:

Part 1: God, Creation and Fall, Law – 20 weeks

Part 2: Christ, Redemption, Grace – 15 weeks

Part 3: Spirit, Restoration, Growing in Grace – 17 weeks

Within each part, there are 3 corresponding categories. We’ve completed “**Part 1: God, Creation and Fall, Law,**” and are about a third of the way through “**Part 2: Christ, Redemption, Grace.**”

How It Works

Each Week:

- Starts with a Question that focuses our attention on a key doctrinal or theological theme.
- Provides an Answer that is a Biblical and time-tested truth. This will, in effect, be the bottom line of each week’s sermon as well as each week’s kids’ and students’ teaching and curriculum.
- Highlights a Key Bible Verse/Passage that will guide our Sunday sermons (as well as the kids and students environments).
- Includes a short Devotional Commentary developed from the writings or sayings of both a past and contemporary preacher/theologian, to help us reflect on the topic being explored.
- Ends with a short, original Prayer.

There's an App for that!

There is an NCC app with everything above (and more) for handy reference! It's great for throughout-the-day reference, for yourself, with your spouse, with your kids, during Life Group, etc. Use one of the QR codes below to download the app, or go to fccgreene.org/ncc



If you will be using this with your children, be sure to turn on “Children’s Mode,” which simplifies the content and includes a song!

The New City Catechism

IntroductionBooksCurriculumWeb AppMobile AppsVideosTranslations

< >

Part 1 ▾

⋮





Question 1

What is our only hope in life and death?

Show Answer

Play Song

☒ Children's Mode

☐ No Animations

Romans 14:7-8

For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Mar 15, 2026 – Wk/Q 27 – “Are All People, Just As They Were Lost Through Adam, Saved Through Christ?” (Romans 5:17)

Answer: No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith. Nevertheless God in his mercy demonstrates common grace even to those who are not elect, by restraining the effects of sin and enabling works of culture for human well-being.

Main Passage:² Romans 5:12-21

(This week's Memory Verse(s) in italics.)

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 *For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.* 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through

² The New City Catechism verse/passage is listed in the title above. However, in order to sufficiently answer the question, and because we always preach through an entire passage, our Main Passage is expanded and Additional Passages may be included.

righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.³

Additional Passages:

- **Genesis 8:20-22** – 20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. 22 While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”
- **Matthew 5:44-45** – 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
- **Romans 2:14-15** – 14 For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

Exegetical Focus

- Adam’s representative trespass introduced sin and death into the human race, establishing the universal reign of condemnation for all humanity in him (Romans 5:12-14; cf Genesis 3:17-19).
- Christ’s one act of righteousness overwhelms Adam’s trespass, securing justification and reigning life for those who receive the abundance of grace (Romans 5:15-17; cf Isaiah 53:11).
- God restrains the full effects of sin through common grace, preserving human life, culture, and moral order even among those outside saving union with Christ (Genesis 8:21-22; Matthew 5:44-45; Romans 2:14-15).

³ Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible*, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Theological Principles

- Humanity stands under two covenantal representatives—Adam and Christ—whose actions determine condemnation or justification for those united to them (Romans 5:18-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).
- Salvation comes only through God's sovereign grace received by faith in Christ, not through moral effort, law-keeping, or human willing (Romans 5:17; Romans 9:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- God's common grace restrains evil and enables societal good without saving sinners, demonstrating divine mercy toward the whole world while reserving redemption for those united to Christ (Matthew 5:45; Romans 2:14-15).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Adam stands as the covenant head of the fallen creation, whose trespass brought universal sin and death into the world (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12).
- Christ appears as the "last Adam," whose obedience secures righteousness, restores humanity's lost dominion, and inaugurates the new humanity under grace (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 15:45).
- Between fall and consummation, God preserves the world through common grace so that the redemptive plan culminating in Christ may unfold within human history (Genesis 8:22; Acts 14:16-17).

Sermon Notes

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary⁴

Christ's own righteousness is credited to them. The reign isn't about power or pride—it's about restored dominion under God's grace, the reversal of death's tyranny. Just as death once reigned over humanity, now grace rules the new creation, giving us both the status and calling to live as royal sons and daughters who reflect God's glory (Genesis 1:26–28; Revelation 22:5). This passage defines the crux of redemptive history: Adam's failure explains universal death, but Christ's obedience fulfills God's plan of eternal life for His people in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; Ephesians 1:4). Common grace still restrains sin and beautifies the world through art, science, and order, but only saving grace restores hearts to reign rightly under the true King. So today, live as one who reigns through righteousness—trusting, obeying, and walking in the grace that abounds more.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Genesis 3:1-19; Psalm 51:1-5
- Tue – Psalm 8; Hebrews 2:5-9
- Wed – Romans 3:9-24; Ephesians 2:1-9
- Thu – Romans 5:12-21
- Fri – Genesis 8:20-22; Matthew 5:44-45; Romans 2:14-15
- Sat – John 3:14-21; Revelation 20:11-15

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Romans 5:12-21 presents a clear two-representative framework for understanding humanity: all people are either in Adam or in Christ. Adam's trespass brought condemnation and death to all he represented, while Christ's obedient act brings justification and reigning life only to those who receive grace through union with Him. This passage rules out both universalism and salvation by moral effort while also affirming God's real but limited work of common grace in the world. As you guide discussion, help the group see how Paul's argument moves from Adam's universal condemnation to Christ's superabounding grace received by faith, and gently redirect conversation away from speculation about "all" toward the passage's emphasis on union with a representative. Ensure your group focuses on Romans 5:17—the turning point where those who "receive the abundance of grace" reign in life—in order to help participants see that salvation is not automatic but personally received through Christ.

Life Group Questions

- (1) How does Paul's teaching that death spread to all through Adam challenge common ideas about human goodness or neutrality?
- (2) What does it mean to receive grace in Romans 5:17, and how is that different from assuming everyone receives it?
- (3) How does the Adam-Christ comparison help explain why salvation is not universal?
- (4) Why is it important to distinguish between common grace and saving grace in everyday life?
- (5) What does it look like for grace to reign in a believer's life right now?
- (6) Pray together, thanking God for grace in Christ and asking for deeper trust, repentance, and obedience flowing from that grace.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: The Bible teaches that everyone is born into Adam's sin, but Jesus came to save people and give them new life. Adam brought sin and death into the world, but Jesus brings forgiveness and life to those who trust Him (Romans 5:17).

Engage Your Child: Show two objects or drawings—one labeled “Adam” and one labeled “Jesus.” Explain that Adam brought sin into the world, but Jesus came to rescue people and give them life with God.

Ask The Question: Who can save us from sin and give us new life?

Deposit The Word: Romans 5:17 – Because of one man's sin, death ruled through that one man, but those who receive God's grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through Jesus Christ. (one finger for “one man,” thumbs down for “sin,” arms crossed for “death ruled,” open hands for “receive,” point upward for “God's grace,” crown gesture for “reign,” point to Jesus)

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The Bible teaches that all people belong to Adam by birth and share in his sin and death. But those who trust Jesus receive grace, forgiveness, and new life because Jesus obeyed God perfectly and died for sinners (Romans 5:18-19).

Engage Your Child: Draw two circles labeled “In Adam” and “In Christ.” Talk about how being “in Adam” means being part of the fallen world, but trusting Jesus means belonging to Him and receiving His righteousness.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why did sin and death come into the world?
2. What did Jesus do that Adam did not do?
3. How can someone belong to Christ instead of remaining in Adam?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Mar 22, 2026 – Wk/Q 28 – “What Happens After Death to Those Not United to Christ by Faith?” (John 3:16-18, 36)

Answer: At the day of judgment they will receive the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them. They will be cast out from the favorable presence of God, into hell, to be justly and grievously punished, forever.

Main Passages:⁵

(This week's Memory Verse(s) in italics.)

- **John 3:14-21** – 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”
- **Revelation 20:11-15** – 11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the

⁵ The New City Catechism verse/passage is listed in the title above. However, in order to sufficiently answer the question, and because we always preach through an entire passage, our Main Passage is expanded and Additional Passages may be included.

dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Exegetical Focus

- Jesus explains the saving meaning of His “lifting up” by connecting the cross to the bronze serpent in Numbers 21, showing that life comes through looking in faith to God’s appointed remedy.
- The repeated participles (“the believing ones”... “the not-believing ones”) divide humanity into two present realities: no condemnation in Christ or condemnation already.
- John contrasts love and judgment, light and darkness, belief and unbelief to show that rejection of Christ is ultimately moral resistance to God’s revealed light.

Theological Principles

- God’s love is demonstrated not by suspending judgment but by giving His Son to bear wrath so sinners may live.
- Faith is the instrument of union with Christ; those united to Him share His life and acquittal, while those outside Him remain under judgment.
- Final judgment publicly confirms what is already true spiritually: those in Christ are justified, and those rejecting Him remain condemned.

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The bronze serpent (Numbers 21:4-9) prefigures the cross, where Christ becomes the curse-bearing substitute so that those who look to Him live.
- Jesus’ first coming inaugurates the saving mission of God, offering mercy before the final day of judgment.
- Revelation 20:11-15 reveals the climactic courtroom scene where the verdict already described in John 3 becomes the publicly declared and eternal sentence.

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

God's love in Christ stands as both the believer's greatest comfort and humanity's clearest dividing line. First, it is comfort for believers: "God so loved the world" (v 16) doesn't mean indiscriminate love without justice, but love that took action for a particular people—He "gave his only Son" to bear His wrath against sin so that all who are believing in Him (v 16, literally "in order that everyone believing," not "whoever might believe," as though all humanity possesses an innate capacity to believe) "should not perish but have eternal life." This love is not sentimental, but it is particular and powerful—it secures what it purposes. Verse 17 clarifies that the Father's sending of the Son was "in order that the world might be saved through him"—the "in order" clause showing divine purpose for His people, not possibility for all humanity—for the mission of Christ's first coming was salvation, not final judgment, which will come at His final return. But this also means condemnation for unbelief: If "the believing ones" (again, a participle, as in v 16) are not condemned, then "the ones not believing" remain "condemned already" (v 18; cf. John 3:36)—a condition that mirrors the logic of Jesus' words to Nicodemus about spiritual death (John 3:3) and John's closing statement about abiding wrath (John 3:36). This passage reveals the binary pattern that runs through all of Scripture—life or death, belief or judgment (Deuteronomy 30:19; Matthew 25:46)—and clarifies that salvation belongs only to those united to Christ by faith. God's love sent the Son to save, but rejecting that love leaves one under the sentence of sin. The only safe place from God's wrath is God's Son. Look to Him, live in Him, and let the reality of His judgment stir gratitude for His grace and compassion for those who remain condemned.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Numbers 21:4-9
- Tue – Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Wed – John 3:14-21
- Thu – John 5:24-29; Romans 8:1
- Fri – Revelation 20:11-15
- Sat – Ephesians 2:1-10

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

John 3:14-21 presents the Bible's sharpest dividing line and gives leaders a clear framework for guiding discussion. God's love is revealed not by overlooking sin but by giving His Son to be lifted up so sinners might live. Help the group see the contrast between believing and not believing: belief brings no condemnation now, while unbelief leaves a person condemned already. Draw attention to how loving darkness rather than light explains unbelief. Revelation 20:11-15 shows the present verdict will be confirmed at final judgment. Ensure your group focuses on the turning point between belief and unbelief in v 18 in order to press personal response and compassionate gospel witness.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What repeated words and contrasts stand out in John 3:14-21 (lifted up, believe, perish, life, condemn, light, darkness)?
- (2) How does Numbers 21 help you understand what "believe" means in John 3:14-15?
- (3) In v 16, how does God define love (not by sentiment, but by giving the Son)?
- (4) What does "condemned already" (v 18) mean, and how do vv 19-20 explain why people remain there?
- (5) How does Revelation 20:11-15 clarify NCC Q28's language about the day of judgment and the final sentence?
- (6) Pray for repentance and faith in your own life, and for bold compassion toward unbelieving friends and family.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: The Bible teaches that people are in danger because of sin, but God loves the world and sent His Son, Jesus, so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life. Jesus was lifted up on the cross so that sinners could be saved.

Engage Your Child: Show a picture of a cross and explain that Jesus died there because He loves us and wants to save us from sin. Talk about how trusting Jesus is like looking to God's rescue.

Ask The Question: Who did God send to save us from sin?

Deposit The Word: John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (hands over heart for “loved,” arms stretched wide like giving a gift for “gave,” point up for “his only Son,” hands clasped together for “believes,” shake head “no” for “not perish,” raise arms upward for “eternal life”)

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Jesus explained that just as the Israelites looked at the bronze serpent to live, people must look to Him in faith to receive eternal life. God showed His love by giving His Son so that those who believe in Him will not perish but will have life forever.

Engage Your Child: Read Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-16 together. Talk about how the Israelites had to trust God's remedy and look at the serpent to live, and how trusting Jesus brings salvation today.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why did the Israelites have to look at the bronze serpent to live?
2. What does it mean to believe in Jesus?
3. What does God promise to those who trust His Son?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Mar 29, 2026 – Wk/Q 29 – “How Can We Be Saved?” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Answer: Only by faith in Jesus Christ and in his substitutionary atoning death on the cross; so even though we are guilty of having disobeyed God and are still inclined to all evil, nevertheless, God, without any merit of our own but only by pure grace, imputes to us the perfect righteousness of Christ when we repent and believe in him.

Main Passage:⁶ Ephesians 2:1-10

(This week's Memory Verse(s) in italics.)

1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Exegetical Focus

- Salvation originates entirely in God's grace and initiative; believers are “saved by grace” rather than by human effort or merit (Ephesians 2:8).
- Faith is the instrumental means by which salvation is received—“through faith”—but it is not the ground or cause of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

⁶ The New City Catechism verse/passage is listed in the title above. However, in order to sufficiently answer the question, and because we always preach through an entire passage, our Main Passage is expanded and Additional Passages may be included.

- Paul explicitly excludes all human boasting by declaring salvation is “not a result of works,” showing that redemption rests wholly on God’s gift (Ephesians 2:9).

Theological Principles

- Human beings cannot save themselves; salvation must come entirely from God’s gracious action because sinners are spiritually dead and under wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:10-12).
- Faith receives Christ but does not earn Him; justification rests on Christ’s righteousness credited to believers rather than their own works (Romans 4:3-5; Titus 3:5).
- Grace that saves also produces transformed living, so good works follow salvation as its fruit rather than its cause (Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-12).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The pattern of salvation by grace through faith runs throughout Scripture—from Abraham’s faith being counted as righteousness to its fulfillment in Christ (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3).
- Christ’s substitutionary death and resurrection provide the objective basis for salvation that faith receives (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:13).
- The new covenant fulfills the promise that God would transform hearts and produce obedience through grace (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Sermon Notes

understand faith as the empty hand that receives Christ, not the price that buys Him—for Abraham was “counted... righteous” as “the one who does not work but trusts” (Romans 4:3-5), and Jesus calls faith “the work of God” in the sense that God effects it, not that we earn by it (John 6:29); therefore we are “justified by his grace as a gift... to be received by faith” (Romans 3:24-26; cf. Titus 3:5). Practically, we must rest our conscience here: because God imputes Christ’s righteousness to those who believe (Philippians 3:9; Galatians 2:16), faith is a dependent, receiving act (as Calvin says, a “passive work”)—so boast only in the Savior who saves, and then walk in the good works He prepared for you (Ephesians 2:10).

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Genesis 3:1-19
- Tue – Titus 3:3-7; John 1:12-13
- Wed – Romans 3:21-28
- Thu – Romans 4:1-8; Galatians 2:16
- Fri – Colossians 2:12-14; Titus 2:11-14
- Sat – John 20:1-10, 18, 24-31

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Ephesians 2:1-10 explains how sinners are saved by moving from humanity’s helpless condition to God’s gracious rescue. Paul shows that apart from Christ people are “dead in the trespasses and sins” in which they once “walked,” living according to the world, the devil, and the desires of the flesh, and therefore under God’s wrath (vv 1-3). Because humanity is spiritually dead, salvation cannot come from human effort but must come entirely from God. The turning point appears in the words “But God” (v 4): out of his mercy and love, God makes believers “alive together with Christ,” displaying “the immeasurable riches of his grace” (vv 5-7). Paul then summarizes the gospel in vv 8-9: “by grace you have been saved through faith... not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” For your Life Group, the key emphasis should be helping people see the difference between trying to earn God’s favor and resting in the grace God freely gives in Christ, which leads to the good works God prepared for believers to walk in (v 10).

Life Group Questions

- (1) What phrases in vv 1-3 describe humanity's condition apart from Christ?
- (2) How does "But God" in v 4 change the direction of the passage?
- (3) What does "by grace... through faith" clarify about how salvation works?
- (4) Why does Paul emphasize "not by works" and "no boasting"?
- (5) How does v 10 protect the gospel from both legalism and passivity?
- (6) Pray together for deeper trust in Christ's finished work and obedience shaped by gratitude.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: The Bible teaches that people cannot save themselves. God saves us by His grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are “saved by grace... not a result of works.” Salvation is God’s gift through Jesus, not something we earn by being good.

Engage Your Child: Give your child a wrapped gift and let them open it. Explain: “You did not earn this gift—you just received it.” Say, “Salvation is like a gift from God through Jesus.”

Ask The Question: Why is salvation something God gives instead of something we earn?

Deposit The Word: Ephesians 2:8-9 – For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (point up for “grace,” hug yourself for “saved,” open hands for “gift,” shake head for “not by works,” point up for “no boasting”)

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The Bible says salvation is a gift from God. Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches that we are “saved by grace... not a result of works.” That means we cannot earn forgiveness by trying harder. We trust Jesus, and God gives salvation as a gift.

Engage Your Child: Write two columns: “Earned” and “Gift.” Talk about examples (chores vs birthday presents). Explain that salvation belongs in the “gift” column because Jesus already did the work on the cross.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why can’t good works save us?
2. What does it mean to trust Jesus by faith?
3. How should someone respond to God’s gift of salvation?

Deposit The Word: See above.

**Apr 5, 2026 – “These Are Written So That You May Believe”
(John 20:1-10, 18, 24-31)**

Main Passage: John 20:1-10, 18, 24-31

(This week's Memory Verse(s) in italics.)

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” 3 So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes. ... 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her. ... 24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” 26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 *but these are written so that*

you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Exegetical Focus

- The resurrection is established through eyewitness detail and interpretive progression, moving from physical seeing to Scripture-shaped belief (vv 1-10; cf Luke 24:25-27).
- John emphasizes that the empty tomb is not self-interpreting; understanding requires Scripture, not merely sensory evidence (v 9; cf Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-11).
- Faith is grounded in apostolic testimony rather than repeatable sight, culminating in Thomas's confession and Jesus' blessing on those who believe without seeing (vv 24-29; cf 1 Peter 1:8).

Theological Principles

- True faith is produced by God through His Word, not by autonomous investigation or self-chosen standards of proof (vv 30-31; cf Romans 10:17).
- Jesus' resurrection confirms His identity as both Messiah and divine Son, demanding personal confession and allegiance, not mere admiration (v 28; cf John 1:1; 5:18).
- Saving belief leads to life in Christ's name, understood as covenant participation in new-creation life rather than bare intellectual assent (v 31; cf John 11:25-26; 17:3).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- The resurrection marks the decisive transition from promise to fulfillment, inaugurating new creation on the first day of the week (v 1; cf Genesis 1:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Jesus' rising vindicates His atoning death and publicly confirms that the Servant has conquered death on behalf of God's people (cf Isaiah 53:11; Acts 2:24).
- The written Gospel now functions as God's appointed means by which post-resurrection believers are united to the risen Christ, extending resurrection faith beyond the original eyewitnesses (vv 30-31; cf Luke 1:1-4; Hebrews 2:3).

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

The resurrection of Jesus is not self-interpreting—God gives saving sight through His written Word so that those who have never seen the empty tomb may genuinely believe and receive life. John opens with Mary Magdalene arriving “while it was still dark” (v 1), a phrase carrying both timestamp and symbolism: new creation dawns while the disciples remain spiritually disoriented. Mary sees the stone removed and assumes grave robbery: “They have taken the Lord... and we do not know where they have laid him” (v 2)—her certainty about her ignorance exposes the problem: the evidence is real, but her interpretive lens is wrong. Peter and John sprint to the tomb, examine the linen cloths and the face cloth “folded up in a place by itself” (v 7)—details ruling out theft but not yet producing understanding—until John “saw and believed” (v 8), yet verse 9 clarifies “as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.” John does not say they remembered Jesus’ words; he says they did not yet grasp Scripture—the written testimony making resurrection a divine necessity (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The risen Jesus then transforms grief into witness: Mary declares “I have seen the Lord” (v 18), and Thomas, demanding his own terms—“Unless I see... I will never believe” (v 25)—is met with mercy as Jesus says “Do not disbelieve, but believe” (v 27), producing the Gospel of John’s summit confession: “My Lord and my God!” (v 28; cf. John 1:1). Yet Jesus redirects: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v 29), and verses 30-31 explain how: “these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” Redemptive-historically, the resurrection is the Father’s vindication of the Son, the inauguration of new creation, and proof the Lamb bore sin—and God ordained this event be known through apostolic testimony preserved in Scripture (Acts 2:32; Romans 10:17). Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: when John says “these are written,” he teaches that God’s normal way of giving sight to those who cannot inspect the tomb is through His inscripturated Word—so today, stop demanding private proof on your own terms and submit to the testimony God has already provided, believing that Jesus is the Christ in order to receive life in His name!

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Psalm 16:8-11; Isaiah 53:10-11
- Tue – Luke 24:25-27, 44-47
- Wed – Acts 2:22-36
- Thu – 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 20-22
- Fri – 1 Peter 1:3-9
- Sat – Jonah 1:1-6

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

John 20 traces how the first disciples moved from confusion to confession as the meaning of the resurrection became clear. Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and assumes Jesus' body has been stolen, and even Peter and John initially struggle to interpret what they see. The linen cloths and the folded face cloth function as real eyewitness evidence, yet John explains in v 9 that "as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead." The resurrection was a real historical event, but the disciples still needed God's written Word to interpret its meaning. The narrative then moves from evidence to encounter as the risen Jesus reveals Himself to Mary and later to Thomas, whose skepticism turns into the Gospel's highest confession: "My Lord and my God." Jesus then widens the focus beyond the eyewitness generation, blessing those "who have not seen and yet have believed," and John explains that the Gospel itself is written so that readers may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing receive life in His name. For Life Group discussion, help your group notice how each person in the passage moves from misunderstanding to clarity, and guide them to consider how Scripture—not personal sight—becomes the primary means by which believers today come to recognize, confess, and trust the risen Christ.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What details in John 20:1-10 show John is giving evidence, not legend, and why does that matter for faith?
- (2) Where do you most relate to Mary's or Thomas's initial assumptions, and how do those assumptions distort what is true?
- (3) How does v 9 (they did not understand the Scripture) change how you think about doubts and clarity?
- (4) Why is Thomas's confession (v 28) the right conclusion of the resurrection story, not merely an emotional moment?
- (5) What does Jesus mean by "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed," and how does that apply today?
- (6) Pray: share one area needing clearer Word-shaped faith, then ask God to use Scripture to deepen belief and give life-giving obedience.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Jesus really rose from the dead. The empty tomb shows that Jesus defeated sin and death and is alive forever.

Engage Your Child: Show a closed box and say, "What do you think is inside?" Let them guess. Then open it and show it is empty. Explain that Jesus's tomb was empty because he came back to life.

Ask The Question: Why was Jesus's tomb empty?

Deposit The Word: John 20:31 – but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (point to a book for "written," tap your head for "believe," point upward for "Son of God," open arms wide for "life")

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The resurrection proves that Jesus is truly the Son of God and the Savior. The Bible is written so people who were not there can still believe and receive life through Jesus.

Engage Your Child: Ask your child if they have ever believed something because a trusted person told them it was true. Explain that the Bible is God's trustworthy testimony about Jesus's resurrection so we can believe even though we did not see it ourselves.

Ask The Questions:

1. What did the empty tomb show the disciples about Jesus?
2. What did Thomas say when he finally believed Jesus had risen?
3. How can people today believe in Jesus even though we have not seen Him?

Deposit The Word: See above.



firstchristian
CHURCH

HELPING PEOPLE FIND AND FOLLOW JESUS