

Cross-Cultural Missions
Lesson – The Burden of the Lord
Scriptures – Luke 4:28-32, 40-44

Introduction to Lesson

Have you ever seen people protesting – like picketing, or holding a rally? Behind every protest is a cause. People speak out because they feel strongly about something important to them. Protesters are passionate. They have a burden, a sense of heaviness, a feeling of responsibility for their cause. Today, there are countless causes in the world, but none more important than winning lost souls to Christ. Therefore, we need a burden for our mission. Each one of us should feel the weight of Christ’s burden for souls. Having a real burden will move us to carry the gospel into the whole world – to all nations and to every creature (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15). In Luke chapter 4, we will see that Jesus’ burden for his mission was the energy that fueled his ministry. His burden kept him reaching out and helped him overcome all opposition.

Key Verse

“And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth” (Mark 1:38).

Questions to Discuss:

When Jesus taught at the synagogue in his hometown, Nazareth, how did the people react to his teaching? (vv. 16, 28)

First, what did they do to Jesus, and second, what were they attempting to do to him? (v. 29)

What did Jesus do to escape? (v. 30)

How did their opposition affect his missionary work? (v. 31)

How did the people in Capernaum respond to his teaching? (v. 32)

What kind of ministry did Jesus have in Capernaum? (vv. 40- 41)

How would you compare his ministry in Nazareth to his ministry in Capernaum? (v. 42)

If you had been in Capernaum with Jesus, doing this successful ministry, how would you have felt about it?

Although the people wanted Jesus to stay in Capernaum, what was his burden? (vv. 43-44)

Think about it

No doubt, being in Capernaum was great. Jesus had a successful ministry there. But his burden urged him to keep going to the next town. Others needed to hear the gospel of salvation. His burden for lost souls and his compassion for people took him from place to place, and from person to person, with the good news. Our mission in the church today is a continuation of the burden of Jesus Christ. We have a great work to do. But we need a real burden in our hearts. Christ’s burden will motivate us to win souls. Let’s pray and ask Jesus to give us a burden for lost souls



Cross-Cultural Missions

Lesson – Counting the Cost

Scriptures – Luke 14:27-33

Introduction to Lesson

We know that Jesus Christ gave his life for our salvation. We cannot earn salvation; and we cannot pay for it. Jesus paid the price on the cross. However, following Jesus as his disciple and fulfilling his mission involve a cost, a sacrifice. Think about it this way. People are willing to pay a high price for things that are extremely valuable to them. Money is no object. An art collector will pay thousands and even millions of dollars for highly valuable masterpieces. Likewise, Jesus said, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matthew 13:45-46). How valuable is the kingdom of heaven to you? Are you willing to give your all to win souls for the kingdom of God? Our mission is costly. Are we willing to give our time, abilities, and money?

Key Verse

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27).

Questions to Discuss:

What two things must we do, if we are to be a disciple of Christ (v. 27)

What do you think it means to bear your cross? What does it mean to “come after” Jesus? (v. 27; Matthew 16:24-26) If you were building a house, why would you first need to count the cost of building it? (v. 28)

What would happen if you started construction, but then realized that you could not afford it? (vv. 29-30)

Would it make sense to wage war against a country without knowing how many troops they have? (v. 31)

If your army was far outnumbered, what would be the best course of action? (v. 32)

What does Jesus require from his disciples?

What is Jesus driving at? (v. 33)

Think about it

Jesus is teaching us that following him is costly. We cannot follow him, until we first count the cost, and decide that the cost is worth it. Nothing must stand in our way. When we set out to follow Jesus and fulfill his mission, it’s going to require something from us. What kinds of things will it require? What kinds of things are necessary in following Jesus? Are we willing to go the distance with Jesus? Are we willing to follow him no matter what it costs us? Are we willing to be his witnesses?



**“Cross Cultural Missions”
Lesson – Sending Missionaries
Scriptures – Acts 13:1-5**

Introduction to Lesson

The world must be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because we have the truth, we must go. But exactly who will go? Sending missionaries into new mission fields is crucial. Think of it this way. You work for a company and get assigned to a special task force. In your team meeting, you determine that the success of the company requires one of the employees to work in another country. Volunteers anyone? Taking the assignment means leaving everything behind and learning a brand new way of life. But that’s not all. The job will require a decrease in your salary, and your living conditions may not be as comfortable as you wish. Who will go? Who will accept the challenge for the good of the company? You see, we can talk about our mission, even preach about it. But ultimately our mission is not complete until the church sends forth missionaries into the world.

Key Verse

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

Questions to Discuss:

- What are the two types of ministers mentioned in verse one? (v. 1)
- What are their names? (v. 1)
- What were these prophets and teachers doing when the Lord spoke to them? (v. 2)
- What was the Holy Ghost saying about Saul and Barnabas? (v. 2)
- Why weren’t the other ministers called in this same way?
- What three things did their fellow ministers do before sending Barnabas and Saul on their way? (v. 3)
- What is the significance of laying their hands on them?
- Were they sent by the church into this ministry, or were they sent by the Lord? (vv. 3-4)
- What did their work require them to do? (v. 4)
- Specifically, what kind of ministry did Saul and Barnabas do as they travelled? (v. 5)

Think about it

Paul and Barnabas fulfilled a third type of ministry – they were missionaries. The church works with God in the sending of missionaries. God first calls; and in response to God’s call, the church sends. The church is not responsible to call young people into the ministry, but we should confirm those whom God has called into his service. The church works “with God,” sending into the mission fields the ministers whom the Spirit has already sent.



The Ministry of the Body

Lesson – A Work for Every Willing Worker

Scriptures – 1 Corinthians 12:18-27

Introduction to Lesson

Think about the complex human body. It has many parts, and each part has a special function. Every member of the physical body is important to us. We do not want to lose any part – right? Each member is necessary to make a whole, complete body. While some members of the human body may seem less important than others, none of us is eager to damage any part of his body. Why is this? Each member of the body belongs to the whole body and is valuable for this very reason. When a body part is damaged or missing (for example, a finger or even a finger nail), the body’s ability to function is hindered to a degree. In today’s lesson, the apostle Paul used this example of the human body to show the importance of every member of the body of Christ, the church. Each member of the church is valuable to the mission of the whole church.

Key Verse

“Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (1 Corinthians 12:22).

Questions to Discuss:

How has God arranged the members (parts) of your body? (v. 18) What would happen to your body if you consisted of only one body part (member)? (v. 19)

Although our bodies have many members (many working parts), how does it function? (v. 20)

Is any one member of the body sufficient on its own?

Is one part of the body more important than others?

How do our body parts support each other? Give examples. (v. 21)

Are the feeble, weak parts of our bodies necessary? Give an example. (v. 22)

Each one of us have “less honorable” and “uncomely” members in his body. Would you rather have an inferior member or would you prefer to have a missing member of the body?

What do we tend to do about the weaker, more inferior parts of our bodies? (vv. 23- 24).

Because every part of the body is important to the whole body, what should the rest of the body do when one member suffers?

When one member is honored? (vv. 25-26)

Think about it

The church is made up of many members, just like the human body. All of its members are important to the whole church. Like the human body, each member of the church has a special part to play in the mission of the church. No one member can do it all, and each member is necessary. Therefore, in the church, there is a work for every willing worker. God has made each one of us to do his special part in the mission.



The Ministry of the Body **Lesson – Equipped to Do the Work** **Scriptures – 2 Timothy 3:14-17**

Introduction to Lesson

Have you ever tried to do a task without the proper tools? An easy job can become challenging, and a difficult job can become frustrating when you lack the right tools. Of course, tools are designed to be used in specific ways. The job is even harder, if not impossible, when you really do not know what you are doing. For any task, having the right tools and knowing how to use them are essential to success in the work. In other words, being equipped to do the work is necessary for success. God has provided a way for us to be equipped for the mission of the church. Are you equipped for the mission?

Key Verse

“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:17).

Questions to Discuss:

What has Timothy known since his childhood? (v. 15)

What was the apostle Paul encouraging Timothy to do? (v. 14)

Why can Timothy be more certain of what he knows? (v. 14; 2 Ti. 1:5, 13; 2:2; 3:10)

What three things will the Holy Scriptures do for us? (v. 15)

Although men were the physical instruments who wrote down the words of God, who actually gave us (inspired) the Holy Scriptures, the Bible? (v. 16)

Name four ways that the Bible is profitable for us? (v. 16)

What impact do the Scriptures have on us? (v. 17)

What do the Scriptures equip us to do? (v. 17)

Think about it

The Bible (the Holy Scriptures) is the main tool of our faith. We need to know everything about our tool and we need to know how to use this tool skillfully (2 Timothy 2:15). Studying and memorizing the Scriptures is essential to knowing the Word of God. We need to know what the Bible says, but we also need to know what it means. Also, we need to know how to apply the Scriptures to our lives. Of course, all of this takes effort. It does not happen automatically, and it does not happen overnight. We must get in God’s Word, praying for the guidance of the Holy Ghost, learning more and more about Jesus Christ and our relationship with him. In this way, we will be better equipped to do the work of our mission in the world.



The Ministry of the Body

Lesson – Work According to One’s Abilities

Scriptures – Matthew 25:14-19

Introduction to Lesson

The human body is a wonderful creation of God (Ps. 139:14). We have so many parts, each with specific functions. Isn't it amazing how all of the parts work together? When a person physically works, the members of the body cooperate to accomplish a task. We call this coordination. However, what if the hand began trying to function like the nose? What if the elbow thought it could see? Such confusion would render the body incapable of performing even the simplest task. In today's lesson, we will see that each member of the body of Christ, the church, should work (or function), according to one's individual gifts and abilities. Each one should use what God has given to him for the benefit of the whole church.

Key Verse

“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey” (Matthew 25:15).

Questions to Discuss:

Read Matthew 25:14 – 19.

In the parable, who is represented by the man who left on a journey and later returned?

When the Lord calls us to serve him, what does he give us?

What do the talents (or money) represent? (vv. 14-15)

Do you believe Jesus would call you to do anything that you were incapable of doing?

When the Lord gives us gifts and abilities, does he give everyone the same abilities or even the same amount of talents? (v. 15)

What should we do with our talents and abilities? (vv. 16-17)

Did burying his talent benefit the servant or his lord? (v. 18)

When Jesus comes again, what will he expect from us? (v. 19)

Think about it

God does not give all of us the same gifts and abilities, but he does expect every member to use what has been given to him. Think about it this way. As a baby matures and grows, he discovers the parts of his own body and eventually understands how these function and how to use them skillfully. So it is in the church. You have a special place in the body of Christ. Seek to grow in the Lord and to understand the abilities and gifts that the Lord has given to you. Then work according to your abilities to benefit the church and its mission in the world.



The Ministry of the Body
Lesson – Work to the Best of Your Ability
Scriptures – Matthew 25:19-30

Introduction to Lesson

Are you giving your very best to God? It's possible to know how to do a good job and even to use our abilities to do a work, yet only to give half an effort. An old saying goes, "Good, better, best: don't rest, until your good is better, and your better is best." In other words, in anything we do, we need to work at being our best. Why do anything less? Why be anything less than your best? We especially should strive to give our all in the work of the Lord. Jesus taught us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). Love is much more than a feeling; it is affection in action. If we love God, let's show him by giving our best to him.

Key Verse

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"
(Matthew 22:37).

Questions to Discuss:

When the lord of the servants returned (that is, the coming of Jesus), what did he do? (v. 19)
Did the first servant use his talents wisely? How do you know? (v. 20) What was the response of his lord?
What did he promise to do for his servant? (v. 21)
What is the difference between the first and second servant?
Did the lord make any distinction between them?
Based on this parable, does the Lord give us all the same amount of gifts and abilities?
Was the servant with two talents any less faithful than the servant with five? Why? (vv. 22-23)
What did the servant with one talent do and why? (vv. 24-25)
Was this what his lord wanted? Was this the purpose of being given a talent? (v. 26)
We should not be afraid to attempt great things for God. How do you think fear affects people in using their gifts and abilities?
At the very least, what should the servant have done with his one talent? (v. 27) The last servant should have done something with his talent, but instead, he did nothing at all. In the end, what did the lord do about this unfaithful servant? (vv. 28-30)

Think about it

Let's not be half-hearted in the work of the Lord. When we give our all, we are patterning ourselves after Jesus Christ. He gave his very best at all times, even down to giving his life for us. Let's work in the mission of the church giving all we can give, doing all we can do, and being all we can be for Christ and for his church, until Jesus comes again.



Church Growth Principles – The Joshua Strategy

Lesson: Called By God

Scriptures: Joshua 1:1-9

Introduction to Lesson

We have a conquest today that includes winning people for Christ and the church. Our plan of action involves invading our communities and taking them over for Christ, one soul at a time. Unlike mortal armies, our power does not come from physical force. Because we are a spiritual army, our power comes by the Word of God and through the Holy Ghost. Are we ready and willing to go out and possess the land? Fulfilling the conquest of the church begins with heeding the call of God. God's Spirit and power worked through Moses as he led the Israelites to many victories over their enemies. Both Moses and Joshua (Moses' minister) answered God's call. Let us follow their diligent examples.

Key Verse

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10).

Questions to Discuss:

- What event caused Joshua to have to take over as Israel's leader? How was he chosen? (v. 1)
- What was the important task God asked Joshua to complete? (v. 2)
- Where would Joshua's ministry lead him? (vv. 3-4)
- What assurance did God give Joshua that he would be able to fulfill his calling? (v. 5)
- How was Joshua instructed to prepare so he and his people could prosper wherever they went? (vv. 6-7)
- What rules did God require Joshua to follow so that he and Israel could be successful? (vv. 8-9)

Think about it

Moses and Joshua both fulfilled God's call to be strong and faithful leaders of Israel. We also must answer the call to be His church in these last days. Like Joshua, God's elect are called to go out and “possess the land.” The only way to succeed at soul winning is to obey God's word and be led by His Spirit. It is important for us to remember that we are called by God and not by man. Some people will reject God's call, but those who heed His call will receive “power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). We are not called to follow men but to follow the Lord. We must not be indifferent to the work He has set before us, but diligently follow on by faith to fulfill His purpose in and through us.



Church Growth Principles – The Joshua Strategy

Lesson: Rise Up

Scriptures: 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 1 Cor. 2:14

Introduction to Lesson

God promised Israel that they would possess the land of Canaan. How did they go about taking what belonged to them? In order to conquer Canaan, Israel had to engage in physical battle. The Israelites fought against their enemies with hand-to-hand combat, taking their territory by force. Likewise, the church must not sit around idle, passively waiting for something to happen. If we want to see church growth, we must rise up and take action in Jesus' name. Physical violence is not the way to conquer our enemies. We need a holy determination to get the work done. Like Joshua and his army, we must face God's challenge boldly.

Key Verse

“Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Joshua 1:2)

Questions to Discuss:

- How does the warfare of the church differ from that of the Israelite army? (2 Cor. 10:3)
- What kind of weapons must we use to fight against evil forces? How are these used effectively? (v. 4)
- What are some worldly strongholds that can only be brought down through Holy Ghost power? (v. 4)
- In what ways has evil imagination caused both Satan and mankind to rebel against God? (v. 5)
- How should our thought life be controlled so that we will obey Christ's teachings? (v. 5)
- Why do the things of God seem foolish to those who are without Him? (1 Cor. 2:14)

Think about it

Before ascending back to His Father, Jesus told His disciples that they should not expect to discern the kingdom of God with their natural eyes. He explained that His was a spiritual kingdom of grace and power: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8). Without spiritual power, churches and ministries are just formal organizations that focus mainly upon finances, numbers, buildings and programs. Zion Assembly Church of God will rise up to fulfill our mission as Christ's witnesses only by staying focused on the spiritual development of our members.



Church Growth Principles – The Joshua Strategy

Lesson – “Cross Over”

Scriptures – Joshua 3:1-17

Introduction to Lesson

God promised to give the land of Canaan to the children of Israel. He called Joshua to lead the Israelites into the conquest of Canaan, but they first had to cross over the Jordan River. The Jordan was a boundary that the Israelites had to cross in order to take possession of the land. It was the body of water that stood between them and their conquest – and between them and the promises of God. In today’s lesson, let us see what it took for them to cross over the Jordan.

Key Verse

“And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan” (Joshua 3:17).

Questions to Discuss:

When the Israelites crossed over the Jordan, they were to follow the Ark of the Covenant from a distance. What was the practical reason for this? (v. 4)

The Israelites did not see all that was ahead – they had to trust the Lord to lead them. What were they required to do in order to experience the Lord’s glory? (v. 5)

By faith, who were the Israelites to follow? (vv. 3, 6-8)

Before they crossed over, what did Joshua declare to the children of Israel? (v. 9)

What was God’s promise to them? (v. 10)

Did the Israelites believe the Word of God? What was the evidence of their faith in God? (vv. 14-17)

Think about it

No doubt, there would be no conquest until they first crossed over the Jordan River. There would be no fighting or conflict, until they committed themselves to pass over. But also, there would be no land to possess or promises of God fulfilled in them. Like Israel’s conquest, the church’s spiritual conquest of winning souls for Christ and adding members to the church is not an easy task. Our enemy, Satan, fights against us. We too must overcome each and every obstacle that stands between us and the promises of God. By faith in Jesus Christ and through obedience to God’s Word, we will overcome anything that hinders us from winning souls and experiencing spiritual victory.



Church Growth Principles – The Joshua Strategy

Lesson – “A United Effort”

Scriptures – Joshua 1:2, 12-16

Introduction to Lesson

When the Lord told Joshua to cross the Jordan River into the land of Canaan, he said, “Thou, and all this people.” No doubt, Joshua was a great military leader, but he alone could not possess the land. God’s plan was for all of the Israelite army to cross over and take possession of the Promised Land. In today’s lesson, we will consider the “we” factor in the conquest of Canaan. God’s plan called for 100% participation in the conquest – a united effort.

Key Verse

“And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go” (Jos. 1:16).

Questions to Discuss:

The Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan River. Who was required to cross over to the west side of the Jordan and take possession of the land? (v. 2)

Which tribes had already received their land on the east side of the Jordan River? (vv. 12-13)

When Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River to take possession of Canaan, what were the 2 ½ tribes allowed to leave behind? (v. 14) Although these tribes had already received their land as a possession, what were the men from the 2 ½ tribes required to do? (v. 14)

For how long were they required to go with the other tribes and fight in the conquest? (v. 15)

How did the 2 ½ tribes respond to this commandment? (v. 16)

Think about it

Like the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, we all should be ready and willing to do our part in the church’s conquest (v. 16). Through our united effort, we will win souls to Christ and his church. Though a few can make a difference, a few cannot do all that is needed in the mission of the church. The success and growth of the church depends on our pulling together in the same direction. As we all decide to move forward in a united effort, we will see our greatest results in the mission of the church.



Church Growth Principles – The Joshua Strategy

Lesson – “God’s Increase”

Scriptures – Joshua 6:1-5, 15-16, 20-21

Introduction to Lesson

The Lord told Joshua to cross over the Jordan River with all of the people into the land that he was giving to them. God promised to give them the land of Canaan. In his promise, we learn an important truth: the reason that they were able to take the land from their enemies was because God was giving the land to them. Essentially, the Lord said to them, “I give this land to you – now, go, and take possession of the land. It’s yours; go get it!” God gives the increase.

Key Verse

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses” (Jos. 1:3).

Questions to Discuss:

- Describe the situation at Jericho. (v. 1)
- What was God’s promise to Joshua? (v. 2)
- Who came up with the plan to win the battle? (vv. 2-3)
- What was the basic strategy? (vv. 3-4)
- What were they to do differently on the seventh day? (vv. 5, 15-16)
- What was going to happen at that time? (vv. 5, 20)
- Did the people actually have to fight against their enemies? (v. 21)
- Could they have taken Jericho without this miracle?
- Who gave them the victory?

Think about it

Like Joshua and the Israelite army, we are God’s army under Jesus Christ. We must fight against the enemy of our souls in order to take possession of God’s promises. Many are lost without Christ, and we must fight against wickedness in order to see them saved. The apostle Paul said, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase...For we are labourers together with God” (1 Co. 3:6, 9). If we want to win people to Jesus Christ and see the church grow, then we have to do something about it. We should pray, witness, and reach out to others, doing what we can to win them to Christ, and then depend on the Lord for the increase. We can accomplish nothing without God’s help.



Church Growth Principles – The Joshua Strategy

Lesson – “God Is Spirit”

Scriptures – John 4:3-30

Introduction to Lesson

If someone asked you, “What is God like,” how would you answer him? Throughout the Scriptures, many words and ideas describe and define “who” God is and “what” God is like. God has revealed himself through a variety of names, like *Jehovah-jireh* (“the Lord sees/provides,” Ge. 22:14) and *Jehovah-shalom* (“the Lord is peace,” Jud. 6:24). Of course, we know God most of all through his Son, Jesus Christ. In today’s lesson, we will see that Jesus explained God in terms of Spirit – Holy Spirit.

Key Verse

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Questions to Discuss:

Describe the meeting between Jesus and the woman of Samaria? (vv. 4-9)

What did Jesus offer her? (vv. 10-14)

Being a Samaritan, rather than a Jew, what was her main concern? (vv. 20, 22)

According to Jesus, how important is physical location when it comes to worshipping God? Does God have physical limitations and boundaries? (vv. 20-21)

What two aspects of worship are necessary to be a true worshiper of God? (v. 23)

How do we know that “spirit” and “truth” really matter to God? (v. 23)

How did Jesus describe God? (v. 24)

Why is the spiritual focus of our worship (spirit/truth) so much more important than any physical concerns in our worship? (v. 24)

Can we worship the Lord apart from spirit and truth? (v. 24; see also Jn. 14:17)

Think about it

Jesus went through Samaria and met a sinful woman at the well. He offered her eternal life, but she did not understand how to come to God. Her thinking was limited to the mountain where the Samaritans worshiped. But Jesus explained that God is not limited to a physical boundary, like a mountain, city, or temple, because God is actually Spirit. Therefore, we must approach God and worship him in spirit and in truth. After we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, only then can we worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:25-30).

