

THE PATHWAY EXPERIENCE

LEADING OTHERS PART 1





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THE JESUS-CENTERED LIFE

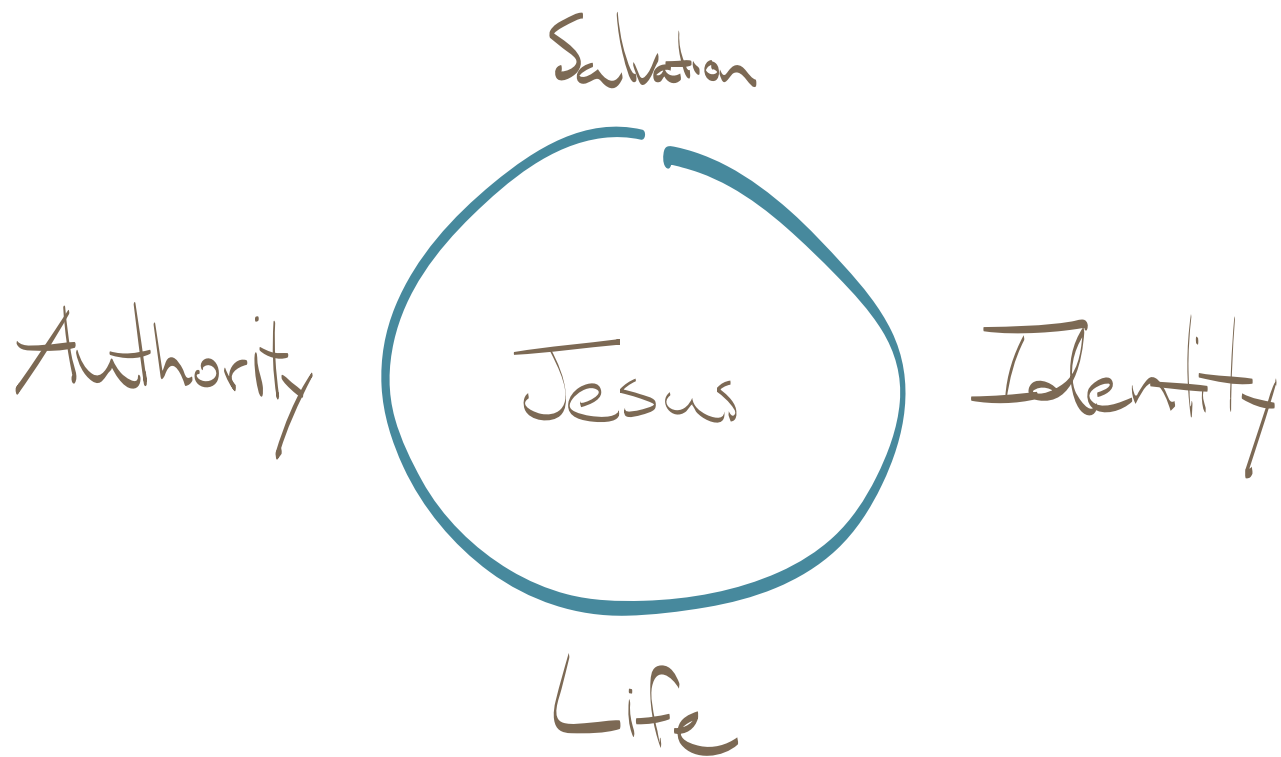
What does it mean for Jesus to occupy the center of your life? Some believe it means that you are very religious; that you attend church, read your bible and try to do more good than bad. Others think it simply means that you seek to live by Jesus' example—keeping the golden rule and serving the poor. These are all fine things of course, but do they really get to the heart of what it means to have a Jesus-centered life?

We are convinced that the Jesus centered life is not made up of things we do for God, but is rather all about what Jesus has done for us. We believe that by faith in Jesus, we now find our salvation, identity, life and authority in Him. These essential qualities cannot be earned or achieved; they can only be received from a gracious God who delights to give them. Every Christian has been redefined by these truths, regardless of their stage of spiritual maturity.

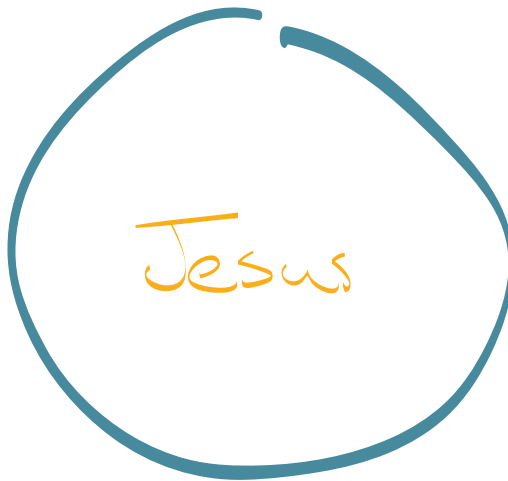
That's good news, isn't it? But here is even better news. The Jesus centered life is not merely a truth that is declared over you; it is also a truth that you live out. To be a disciple of Jesus is to go progressively deeper into the Jesus centered life, discovering and experiencing more of Christ at every turn. This is the wonderful and unique privilege we have as God's children, and we believe that this is what Jesus had in mind when He said, "I came that they might have life, and life to the full."

Ready for more good news? This is far more than a self-improvement project between you and Jesus. This is a mission that is meant to impact all of your life and relationships. Jesus called His first disciples in this way: "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." That same promise is yours to take hold of! By living as a disciple of Christ, you are given an eternally significant role to play; one where your faith can have a multiplying influence on the world around you.

At Pinelake Church, God is calling each of us to step into the Jesus centered life. Will you join us?



Jesus did not come to simply be an element of your life; He came to be the center of your life. To be a Christian means that you now live a new life where Jesus is at the heart of everything you are. Think of your life as a circle with Jesus at the center.



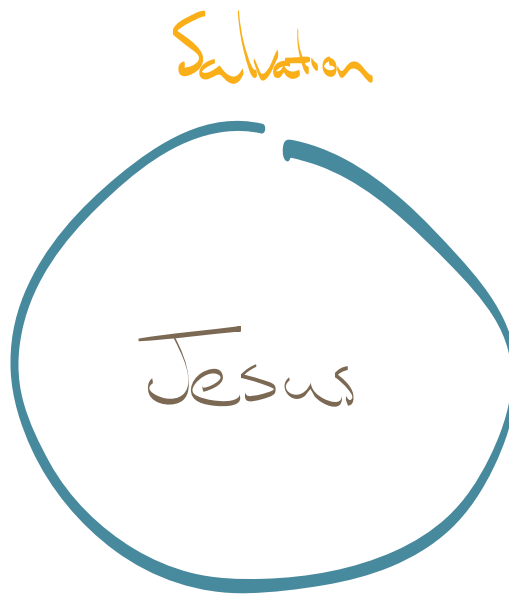
From this center, He now declares and empowers your identity. Here are four key things that are now true of you because of your faith in Christ:

- » Salvation
- » Identity
- » Life
- » Authority

Your Salvation is in Jesus:

Jesus is God who became a man, living sinlessly and dying willingly as the complete payment for your sin. Because your salvation is in Jesus,

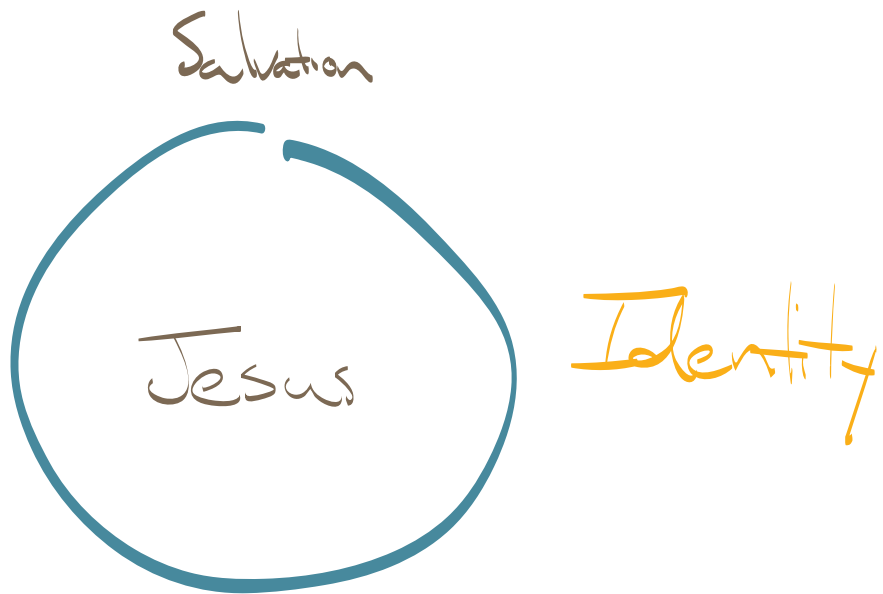
- » You now have relationship with God the Father (John 1:12; Romans 8:15–16)
- » You now have redemption from your sin (Colossians 1:13–14)
- » You now have the righteousness of Jesus as your standing (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- » You now have received the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 1:13–14)



Your Identity is in Jesus:

You are now who Jesus says you are. You are chosen, holy, dearly loved, righteous, perfect and a child of God forever.

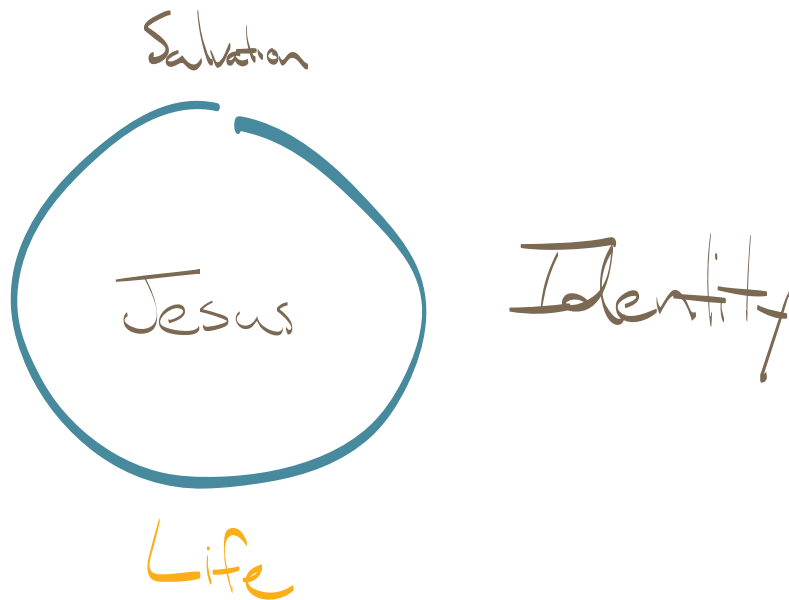
- » You are no longer defined by your sins, struggles and shortcomings (Romans 8:1–4)
- » You are not striving to earn God's love and favor (Philippians 2:13)
- » You are made new, not better (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- » You are not of this world (Colossians 3:1–4)
- » You are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19)
- » You are perfect and holy (Ephesians 5:25–27)
- » You are royal — a priest chosen as God's possession (1 Peter 2:9–10)



Your Life is in Jesus:

You no longer live for yourself and by yourself but Jesus lives in you and through you. You live from the inside-out, no longer from the outside-in.

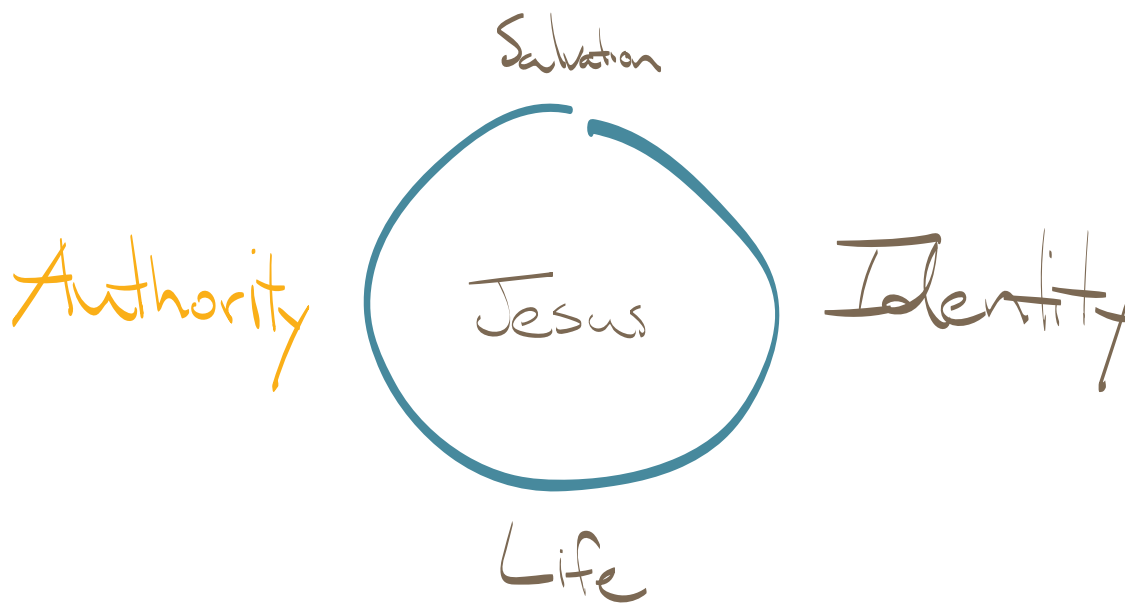
- » Christ lives in you and you live by faith in Him (Galatians 2:20)
- » You died and are now alive in Christ (Colossians 3:1–4)
- » You have a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26)
- » You don't live by the flesh, but battle it (Romans 8:12–15; Galatians 5:24)
- » You live by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16–18)



Your Authority is in Jesus:

The Holy Spirit within you means you have direct access to the Father and live in a different realm. As God's child, you have been given the authority to exercise power. The Kingdom of God is over you, in you and exists through you.

- » You have authority to make disciples (Matthew 28:18–20)
- » You have authority to heal (James 5:14–16)
- » You have authority to fight spiritual battles (Ephesians 5:10–17)



1

SALVATION IN CHRIST

EXPOSURE TO THE WORD

In Luke 18:9–14, Jesus tells the story of a Pharisee and a tax collector. Here we will learn that faith in Christ brings forgiveness of sin and true freedom.

Salvation in Christ brings us freedom, confidence and lasting life change.

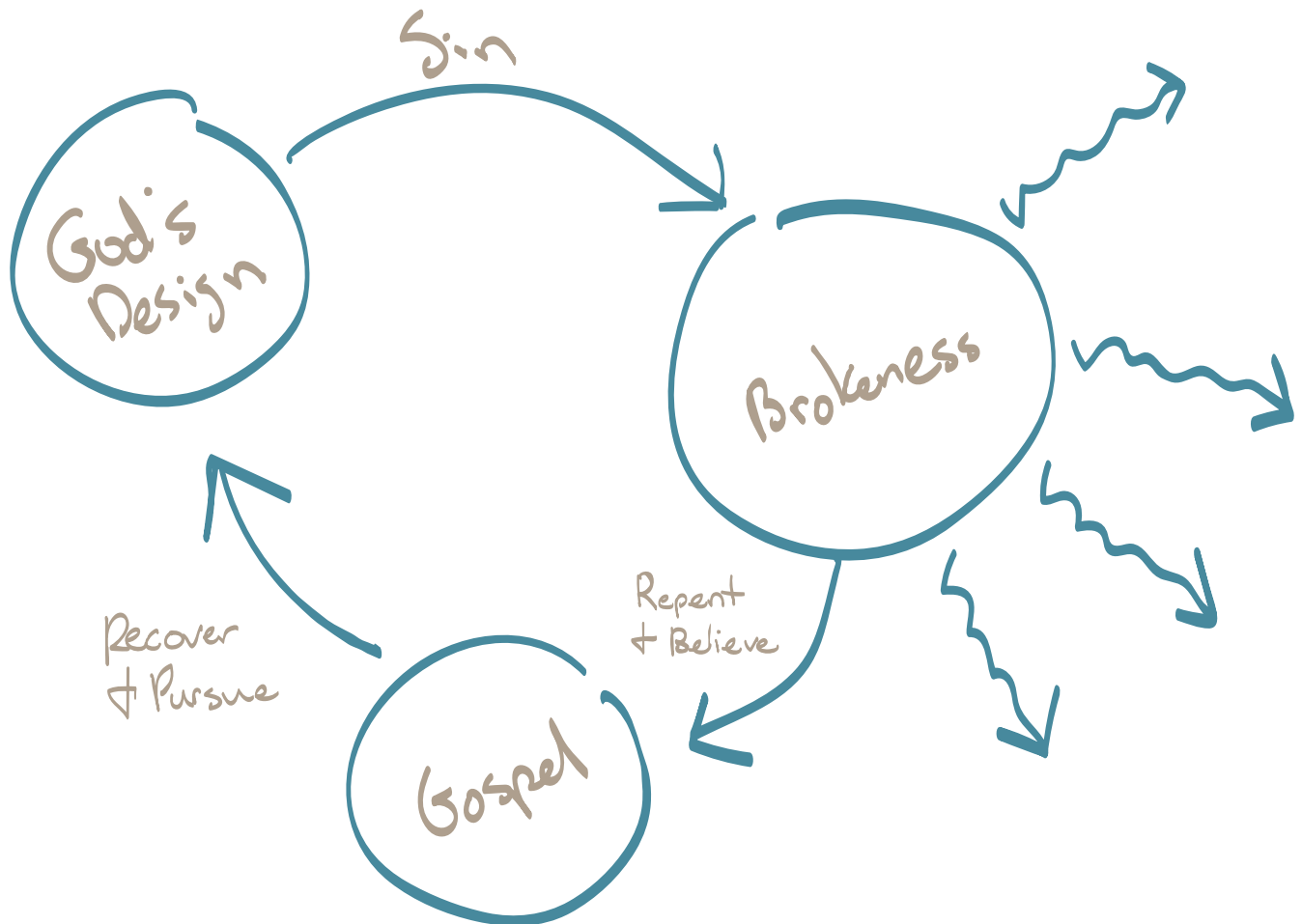
EXPLANATION OF THE WORD

Freedom: The salvation Jesus offers is simultaneously free (Romans 6:23) and freeing. Like the tax collector, you cannot save yourself. Through faith in Christ, your debt of sin has been paid (Colossians 2:13–14). You are dead to sin but alive in Christ (Romans 6:8–11).

Confidence: Only trusting in Christ for His free gift of salvation can bring true confidence (Hebrews 7:25). It is important to see that trusting in self, like the Pharisee, destroys confidence. Your confidence is rooted in Christ's sacrifice, not your performance. We know God loves us because Jesus died for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:6–11), and no one can separate us from His love (John 10:27–29).

Life Change: Salvation brings about a change of heart (2 Corinthians 5:17) which leads to changes in behavior. The Bible teaches that everyone who commits their life to Jesus will be transformed (Ephesians 2:10). Jesus is at work in every disciple's life, making you more like Himself (Philippians 2:13).

3 CIRCLE – GOSPEL DRAWING



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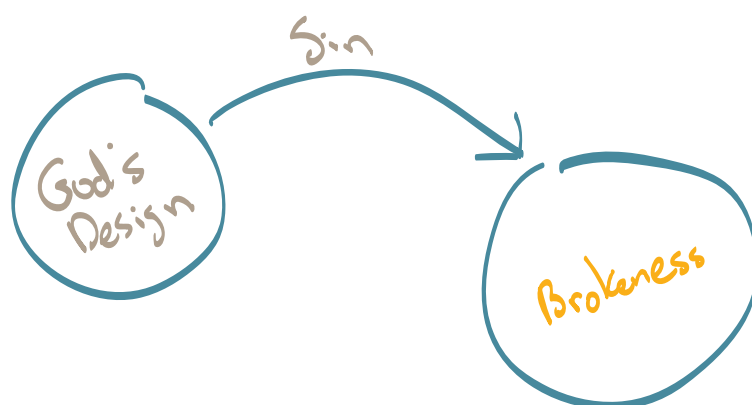
God has a design for how your life is meant to work. He has a design for your identity, your relationships, your family, your work, your purpose, etc.; and because God is altogether good, loving and righteous, His design for you is the best possible life. This design is spelled out in the Bible and is also modeled in the person of Jesus.



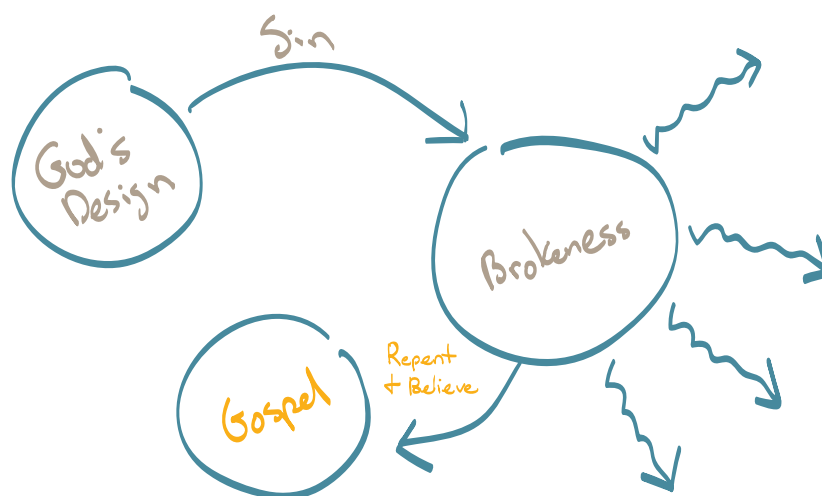
The problem, however, is that every single person misses God's design in some way. We all choose to set His ways aside in favor of our own, and the outcome is a breakdown in the life that He has created us for. This breakdown is called sin, and it separates us not only from God's plan, but from God Himself. You and I are no exception. We are sinners who have missed God's design for life.



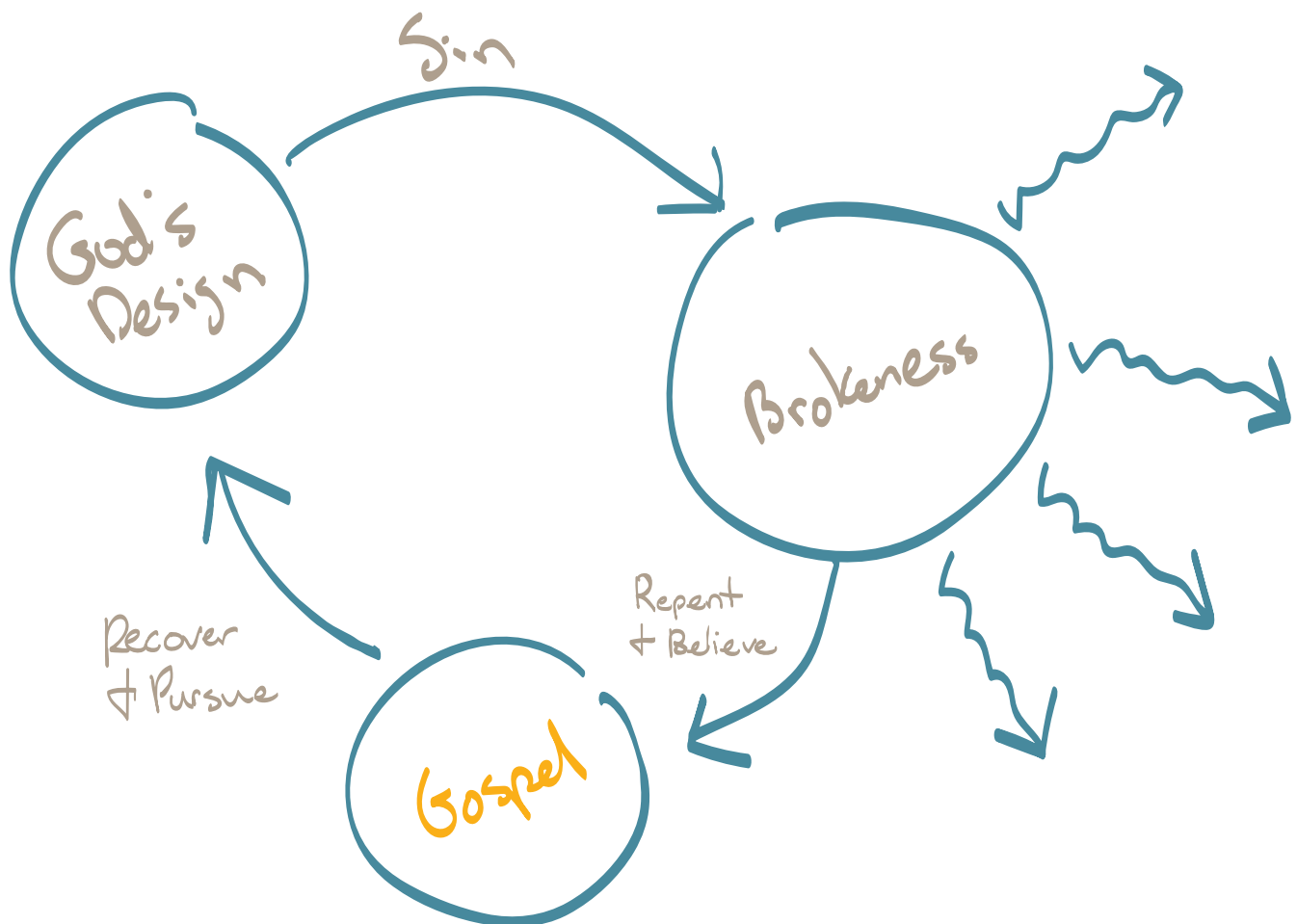
This sin leads to brokenness, which is a state of being that cannot fulfill God's purpose and design for you. When you are in this place of brokenness, all areas of your life are touched by sin and are unable to find wholeness. Your identity, relationships, family, work, etc., are not what they ought to be, and no amount of effort on your part can put this back together. Our attempts to heal our own brokenness only lead us further from God's design.



But there is wonderful news in the midst of brokenness! God is unwilling to leave you there to flounder. Instead, He sent His own Son, Jesus, to restore you to God's design by forgiving all your sin. Rather than trying harder to make things right, all that God requires of you now is to repent of sin (change your mind and your life's direction) and believe in Jesus. It is faith in Jesus that brings about the restoration you require.



That is the message of the Gospel; the good news that Jesus has come to bring you back to God so that His design may be fulfilled in your life. And now, having put your trust in Jesus, you are fully able to desire God as you should (the effects of sin no longer have power over you!). You may now pursue God with all your heart, and you can recover the design that was broken because of sin.



INTRODUCTION

- 1 In the drawing, we talk about the fact that we have all stepped outside of God's design for us. Can you relate to that? How?
- 2 In what ways have you experienced brokenness as a result of sin?
- 3 In the midst of your brokenness, what would you consider to be "good news"? What would give you hope for redemption?

One way to miss God's design for your life is to fill your life with harmful, destructive things (see Galatians 5:19–21). But it is also possible for a "good" person to miss God's design by making your life self-centered rather than God-centered. It is only through faith in Jesus that you can have freedom from sin, confidence in salvation, and the guarantee of a changed life.

STORYING

Tell the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14) in your own words.

⁹ And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: ¹⁰ “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.” [Luke 18:9–14](#)

Choose two or three questions to discuss from the question bank below.

- » Where do you see yourself in the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector?
- » Who is the primary “source” of the Pharisee’s life?
- » Looking at the drawing, where would you say the tax collector is? What about the Pharisee?
- » Those who trust “in themselves” miss God’s design by being self-centered. What does this look like in our culture? How does this problem show up in your own life?
- » Because the Pharisee trusted in himself, he looked down on others. What happens to the way we look at others if we trust in Jesus for salvation instead of our good behavior?
- » Compare the Pharisee’s prayer with the tax collector’s. Where was the trust and hope of each rooted?
- » What do Jesus’ words in verse 14 tell you about how you can have confidence in salvation?
- » From the world’s perspective, the Pharisee was clearly good and the tax collector was clearly bad. But how did God view them?

APPLICATION

¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. [Colossians 2:13–14](#)

- » Sin brought you only guilt and spiritual death, but now you are forgiven and alive in Christ. How does this freedom change you?

²⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. [Hebrews 7:25](#)

- » What does this verse mean? How does it give you confidence in salvation?

¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

- » What does it mean that you are a new creation? What old things in your life have passed away because of your faith in Jesus? What new things are you celebrating that Jesus is doing?

EXPERIENCE THE WORD

- » Commit to worship weekly at Pinelake.
- » Begin reading the Gospel of John, one chapter per day. Make note of the themes of freedom, confidence and life change as you come across them.

[illegible]

2

SALVATION IN CHRIST: YOUR STORY

EXPOSURE TO THE WORD

Luke 5:1–11 tells the story of Simon’s life-changing encounter with Jesus. Here we will learn that your story of life change in Christ is both precious to you and profitable to others.

EXPLANATION OF THE WORD

Life Before Christ: Simon, like all people apart from Christ, was dead in his sins (Ephesians 2:1–3). Like Simon, you are a sinner who has missed God’s design and fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). This is the central human problem: all people desperately need the forgiveness only Christ can give.

Encounter With Christ: Jesus entered into Simon’s life and revealed His true identity. Simon responded in faith and worship. When a person encounters Jesus, the only right response is to trust Him (Ephesians 1:13–14) and to look to Him alone for salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Life Change: Simon left his old life behind to follow Jesus and fulfill the purpose that Jesus had for him. The Bible declares to us that salvation in Christ changes everything (2 Corinthians 5:17) — it changes both your position before God for eternity (John 6:40) and the purpose of your life in the present (Colossians 3:1–3).

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Before you became a Christian, how did you measure up to the world's standard of what it means to be a good person?
- 2 Looking back on that time, how do you recognize the ways in which you were outside of God's design for your life?
- 3 What, specifically, has changed about your priorities, your passions or your goals, since coming to faith in Jesus?

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that our life stories aren't that interesting or impressive. Scripture, however, paints a different picture. According to the Bible, everyone's life story is valuable, but the one who has been changed by Jesus has an especially valuable story to tell. Every thought, attitude and action that Christ has redirected is a miracle of God's grace. Our life stories, no matter how dramatic, all point to the greatest story — the story of how God made a way for sinners like us to be restored to a right relationship with Him through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ. Your story of life change in Christ is both precious to you and profitable to others.

STORYING

Tell the story of Simon's encounter with Jesus (Luke 5:1–11) in your own words.

¹ Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; ² and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. ³ And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. ⁴ When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; ⁷ so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him. [Luke 5:1–11](#)

Choose two or three questions to discuss from the question bank below.

- » Simon was a poor, uneducated and unknown fisherman. Who were you and what were you like before encountering Jesus?
- » Jesus clearly sought Simon out. In what ways do you feel Jesus has sought you?
- » How do you think you would have responded to the miraculous catch of fish? What does the disciples' response to Jesus tell us about them?
- » What did this miracle reveal about Jesus? What miraculous work has He done in your life?
- » What about Simon's response to Jesus exemplifies faith? How has your faith in Jesus changed you?
- » How did Jesus transform Simon's life and purpose? How has He transformed yours (see Ephesians 2:4–10)?

APPLICATION

¹ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. [Ephesians 2:1–3](#)

- » How do these verses help you understand who you were before coming to faith in Jesus? Why is it important to be keenly aware of who you were before Christ came into your life?

⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ . . . ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; [Ephesians 2:4–8](#)

- » What did Jesus do to change your life story?

¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. [Romans 8:1–2](#)

- » What has changed about your life, both inwardly and outwardly, because of your faith in Christ?

RESOURCE FOR GOD STORY: THE APOSTLE PAUL'S TESTIMONY ACTS 26:1–23

Life Before Christ

¹ Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense: ²"In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; ³especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

⁴ "So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; ⁵since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion. ⁶ And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers; ⁷ the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly serve God night and day. And for this hope, O King, I am being accused by Jews. ⁸ Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?

⁹ "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰ And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.

How He Came to Know Christ

¹² "While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³ at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. ¹⁴ And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵ And I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; ¹⁷ rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, ¹⁸ to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

[Continue reading on next page.](#)

His Life After Salvation

¹⁹ "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰ but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.

²¹ For this reason some Jews seized me in the temple and tried to put me to death. ²² So, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; ²³ that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."

EXPERIENCE THE WORD

- » Learn to draw and explain The Jesus-Centered Life and the 3-Circle Drawing.
- » Write out your story of life change using the template below.

Life before Christ (worldview, attitudes, behaviors and experiences)....

How I came to know Christ...

My life since salvation in Christ...

3

IDENTITY IN CHRIST

EXPOSURE TO THE WORD

Acts 8:26–39 tells the story of Philip’s encounter with an Ethiopian man. Here we will learn that we are no longer identified by sin, but have been united with Jesus in every way.

All believers are called to two baptisms — physical and spiritual. Spiritual baptism is initiated by the Holy Spirit the moment one believes. Disciples are to seek out physical baptism after coming to faith as an outward confession of faith and as a means of committing to the local church.

EXPLANATION OF THE WORD

Spiritual Baptism: The Ethiopian man’s faith in Jesus identified him with Christ. To be baptized means to be immersed in, or united with Jesus (Romans 6:3–4). The moment a person trusts in Jesus, he is spiritually baptized—united with Jesus by faith and eternally secured in a relationship with God (Romans 6:8–11).

Physical Baptism: This followed as a natural, outward response to the Ethiopian man’s faith in Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20). Water baptism reveals publicly what Jesus has done within us. Physical baptism is a public affirmation of faith that Jesus commands all disciples to take part in (Acts 16:30–34).

INTRODUCTION

- 1 What personality traits, values and desires make you the unique person you are?
- 2 How has coming to know Christ reshaped or changed your values and desires?
- 3 What is baptism? What does the decision to be baptized communicate about a person's values?

Baptism is outward sign of an inward spiritual reality. By being baptized publicly, you communicate that Christ has already done the work of spiritual baptism in your heart — He has cleansed you of your sin, raising you from spiritual death in sin to spiritual new life in Him. By being baptized, we are declaring publicly to the church that we have been united to Christ and desire to be connected to His body, the Church.

STORYING

Tell the story of Philip and the Ethiopian man (Acts 8:26–39) in your own words

²⁶ 26 But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." ³⁰ Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "He was led as a sheep to slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He does not open His mouth. ³³ "In humiliation His judgment was taken away; Who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth." ³⁴ The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. ³⁶ As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁷ [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] ³⁸ And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. [Acts 8:26–39](#)

Choose two or three questions to discuss from the question bank below.

- » For what purpose did God lead Philip out to the road to Gaza? Whom has God led to minister to you during your faith journey?
- » Baptism is an outward sign of an inward spiritual reality. What inward spiritual reality does baptism signify (see Romans 6:1–11 and 1 Peter 3:18–22)?
- » What apprehension did the Ethiopian man's question in verse 36 convey? What was the necessary requirement for baptism (see Acts 16:30–34)?
- » What would you say to someone who says, "I believe that Jesus is my Lord and Savior, why do I need to be baptized?"
- » What is the difference between spiritual baptism and physical baptism? When does each occur? Why are both important?
- » Read 2 Timothy 1:7–9. What do Paul's words say to those of us who might have fears or worries about being baptized?

APPLICATION

¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? ² May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, ⁶ knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷ for he who has died is freed from sin. [Romans 6:1–7](#)

- » How can you grow to be more mindful of the fact that you have been united spiritually to Christ by faith? What changes might a greater awareness of this spiritual reality produce in your heart and life?

¹⁸ And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” [Matthew 28:18–20](#)

- » Why do you think Jesus commanded physical baptism? What does that tell us about the importance of the local church? How does the last command to “observe all that I have commanded you” relate to being baptized (united) with Jesus?

WHO AM IN CHRIST?

I am accepted...

- » I am God's child. John 1:12
- » As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ. John 15:15
- » I have been justified. Romans 5:1
- » I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:17
- » I have been bought with a price and I belong to God. 1 Corinthians 6:19–20
- » I am a member of Christ's body. 1 Corinthians 12:27
- » I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child. Ephesians 1:3–8
- » I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. Colossians 1:13–14
- » I am complete in Christ. Colossians 2:9–10
- » I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:14–16

I am secure...

- » I am free from condemnation. Romans 8:1–2
- » I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances. Romans 8:28
- » I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the love of God. Romans 8:31–39
- » I have been established, anointed and sealed by God. 2 Corinthians 1:21–22
- » I am hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:1–4
- » I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me. Philippians 1:6
- » I am a citizen of Heaven. Philippians 3:20
- » I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7
- » I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me. 1 John 5:18

I am significant...

- » I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine and a channel of His life. John 15:5
- » I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit. John 15:16
- » I am God's temple. 1 Corinthians 3:16
- » I am a minister of reconciliation for God. 2 Corinthians 5:17–21
- » I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm. Ephesians 2:6
- » I am God's workmanship. Ephesians 2:10
- » I may approach God with freedom and confidence. Ephesians 3:12
- » I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

EXPERIENCE THE WORD

- » If you have not experienced baptism as a believer, set a date to be baptized.
- » Join a small group if you have not already.
- » Take time to study the Scriptures on the previous page. Which of these truths do you have the hardest time accepting, and why? Commit those particular verses to memory and ask the Lord to solidify these words in your heart.

[illegible]

4

LIFE IN CHRIST

EXPOSURE TO THE WORD

Luke 19:1–10 tells the story of Jesus’ encounter with Zaccheus. Here we learn that although we are saved by faith alone in Jesus, the new life we have by faith naturally leads to good works.

EXPLANATION OF THE WORD

Not by Works: We all default to thinking that we can earn God’s love through our efforts or good works. Zacchaeus likely assumed he was cut off from God because of the many ways he had cheated people as a tax collector (James 2:10). Like Zacchaeus, when we truly encounter Jesus, we discover that His love is not contingent on our efforts (Romans 4:5). Through Christ, God freely offers us a relationship with Himself, all we must do is receive this relationship by faith (Galatians 2:16).

Defined by Grace: Zacchaeus put all of his weight, his trust, on God to forgive him and show grace (Ephesians 2:8–9). No amount of goodness can earn God’s love and no amount of badness can lose it (Titus 3:4–7). Your new identity is “in Christ”—a recipient of God’s free and gracious love.

Our Response: Like Zacchaeus, you have been set free from sin, meaning you can live a life fully devoted to God (Galatians 2:20). In fact, God has already set a path for you to live a new life that honors Him and blesses others (Ephesians 2:10).

INTRODUCTION

- 1 When have you felt left out, or even ostracized, by others? How do these kinds of experiences shape our identity?
- 2 As Christ becomes more and more the one who acts as the source of your life, how does your view of yourself change?

Thinking too little or too much of yourself are both rooted in a misplaced focus — a focus on self. Zacchaeus likely thought too little of himself, thinking that because he had devoted his life to cheating others that he was outside God's grace. Thankfully, however, Christ offered Him grace. Christians are no longer identified by their sin, which changes the way we view everything, even ourselves. As those who have trusted Christ, we are defined by grace — we know we did not earn God's love, and yet we also live with confidence knowing that our relationship with God is not contingent on our spiritual performance or efforts. Ironically, it is this confidence in Christ that actually propels us to do good works that honor God and bless other people.

STORYING

Tell the story of Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10) in your own words.

¹ He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. ³ Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. ⁴ So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." ⁶ And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. ⁷ When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸ Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." ⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:1–10

Choose two or three questions to discuss from the question bank below.

- » Where do you see yourself in the story? Do you identify with Zacchaeus in any way? How so?
- » Tax collectors like Zacchaeus were generally despised by the public. They were considered both thieves and traitors. With regards to sin, how do you think you compare with Zacchaeus? Why?
- » Have you ever felt like your reputation or past sins disqualified you from having a relationship with Christ? Why are we sometimes tempted to think this way?
- » What about Jesus moved Zacchaeus to repentance (Romans 2:4)? What are some specific changes God's grace has produced in your heart and life?
- » Jesus didn't say a word to Zacchaeus about money, so why did he choose to give the way he did in verse 8? How, specifically, has your faith in Jesus compelled you to live differently?

APPLICATION

¹⁶ ... nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified. [Galatians 2:16](#)

- » Why do we sometimes try to justify ourselves by our good works? What is wrong with thinking that we can do so?

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. [Ephesians. 2:8-9](#)

- » How might you regularly remind yourself that your salvation is by God's grace through faith in Jesus? How should the reality of salvation by grace through faith influence your identity, behavior, and priorities?

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. [Ephesians 2:10](#)

- » Good works cannot save us, but they are meant to be a defining mark of the Christian life. What are some of the good things that you feel God has prepared for you to do?

EXPERIENCE THE WORD

» **Select a person each day to pray for and bless in a specific way.**

[illegible]

5

AUTHORITY IN CHRIST

EXPOSURE TO THE WORD

John 14:1–17 recounts Jesus’ words to His disciples concerning the Holy Spirit. Here we will learn that God has given His Spirit to keep you connected to Himself in all that you do.

The Spirit dwells in you, empowering you to know and honor God and helping you to understand and submit to God.

EXPLANATION OF THE WORD

Empowerment: Jesus says His disciples are better off if He leaves them, because they will continue His works in His place. On our own we can neither know nor honor God. The Spirit, however, has been given so that you might know and live for Christ (Romans 8:3–8).

Help: All followers of Christ receive a “Helper” — the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always with us to strengthen, teach (John 14:26), guide, fill (Romans 8:26–27) and transform us (Galatians 6:19–20).

Indwelling: The unbelieving world does not know God’s Spirit, but disciples will know Him and He will reside in them. It is important to know that the Spirit is not a power that surrounds you. The Spirit is the person of God who lives in you (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19–20).

INTRODUCTION

- 1 How do you tend to respond to the authorities in your life? Why?
- 2 In what ways is Jesus the ultimate authority in your life? Where in your life do you feel that you haven't submitted to His authority yet?

A Christian understanding of authority differs from that of the world. Unbelievers often balk against the authorities in their lives, looking for ways to get more authority for themselves. Growing Christians, however, find joy and purpose in submitting to the authority of Christ. And further, we grow more confident in our faith, learning to exercise the authority Christ has given us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

STORYING

Tell the story of Jesus' promise of the Spirit (John 14:1–17) in your own words.

¹ "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. ⁷ If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him." ⁸ Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. ¹³ Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. ¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. [John 14:1–17](#)

Choose two or three questions to discuss from the question bank below.

- » What does Jesus assume those who believe in Him will do (v. 12)? Does Jesus' assumption feel intimidating to you? Why or why not?
- » What difference does it make in your life to know the Holy Spirit is a Person and not just a doctrine, entity or some sort of force?
- » What is the relationship between prayer and finding our identity in Jesus? How might prayer empower us to do God's works and live for His glory?
- » How might you explain your personal understanding and experience of verse 17, where it says, "You know the Spirit because He abides with you and will be in you"?
- » What does it mean to pray in Jesus' name? What does it mean to pray according to His will?
- » In what ways has the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit empowered you to serve Christ and advance His kingdom?
- » What does Jesus promise to believers to help us live for His glory and keep His commandments?

APPLICATION

¹¹ When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but it is the Holy Spirit. [Mark 13:11](#)

- » What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to work within you, and even speak for you? How does His presence within you change the way you think, pray and live?

³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. [Romans 8:3–6](#)

- » What does it mean to walk according to the Spirit? What is one practical way you could deepen your awareness of the Spirit's presence in your life?

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? [1 Corinthians 6:19](#)

- » Why must we recognize Christ's authority and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us as we carry out the responsibilities He has given us? How can you grow in the area of giving God's Spirit more authority in your life?

EXPERIENCE THE WORD

- » Read Romans 8 every day for one week. Make note of what this chapter says the Spirit does.
- » Attend Starting Point at Pinelake if you never have.

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Pinelake is one church with multiple campuses:
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