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A Spiritual Lesson In Video Game Language 9c

Inspired By God, Presented And Written By Pastor
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(In God I Trust And Write)

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Platform: Atari2600, NES

Games: Fishing Derby (Atari2600), Super Mario
Bros. 3 (NES), Super Mario All-Stars: Super
Mario Bros. 3 (SNES)

Topic: Around The World 3—Fishers Of Men

1: Opening Prayer

2: Opening Discussion And Bible Study # 1: In the last two lessons of the “Around The World” set, we have seen what damage the wrong timing, or attitude can do and it's not pretty. What do you suppose the right attitude would be?

We have already covered a lot of this, but the attitude must be surrender to God and His plans and then the right heart to discern those plans. How do you suppose that we do this?

Prayer and faith are keys to winning here. Try something like this scripture below in Psalm 51.

Psa 51:1 To the Director: A Davidic Psalm.

When the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy, God, according to your gracious love, according to your unlimited compassion, erase my transgressions.

Psa 51:2 Wash me from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin.

Psa 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgression; my

sin remains continually before me.

Psa 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done what was evil in your sight. As a result, you are just in your pronouncement and clear in your judgment.

Psa 51:5 Indeed, in iniquity I was brought forth; in sin my mother conceived me.

Psa 51:6 Indeed, you are pleased with truth in the inner person, and you will teach me wisdom in my innermost parts.

Psa 51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Psa 51:8 Let me know joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

Psa 51:9 Hide your countenance from my sins and erase the record of my iniquities.

Psa 51:10 God, create a pure heart in me, and renew a right attitude within me.

Psa 51:11 Do not cast me from your presence; do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Psa 51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and let a willing attitude control me.

Psa 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors about your ways, and sinners will turn to you.

Psa 51:14 Deliver me from the guilt of shedding blood, God, God of my salvation. Then my tongue will sing about your righteousness.

Psa 51:15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

Psa 51:16 Indeed, you do not delight in sacrifices, or I would give them, nor do you desire burnt offerings.

Psa 51:17 True sacrifice to God is a broken spirit. A broken and chastened heart, God, you will not despise.

Psa 51:18 Show favor to Zion in your good pleasure; and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Psa 51:19 Then you will be pleased with right sacrifices, with burnt offerings, and with whole burnt offerings. Then they will offer bulls on your altar.

This is a Psalm of David; he was repenting of his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, who

was her husband. Psalm 51 is a good way of beginning a true journey with God for anyone though. We have all sinned in different ways and need cleansing all the time.

We also need to remember this basic Biblical fact in Psalm 1: 1-6

Psa 1:1 How blessed is the person, who does not take the advice of the wicked, who does not stand on the path with sinners, and who does not sit in the seat of mockers.

Psa 1:2 But he delights in the LORD's instruction, and meditates in his instruction day and night.

Psa 1:3 He will be like a tree planted by streams of water, yielding its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither. He will prosper in everything he does.

Psa 1:4 But this is not the case with the wicked. They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

Psa 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not escape judgment, nor will sinners have a place in the

assembly of the righteous.

Psa 1:6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will be destroyed.

3: Game Clip, Discussion And Bible Study # 2:

Now that we have learned the great attitude of humility and repentance, now what?

God will now build on His creation of the righteous man or woman.

Let's look at this clip from the Atari2600 game Fishing Derby.

Game Link:

http://toonspirit.net/lessons_and_studies/s16/Fisher1.webm

One of the things that Jesus did in His earthly ministry to us is that he taught using common things like fishing.

Let's look at Matthew 4: 18-22.

Mat 4:18 While Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon (also called Peter) and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea, because they were fishermen.

Mat 4:19 "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fishers of people!"

Mat 4:20 So at once they left their nets and followed him.

Mat 4:21 Going on from there he saw two other brothers—James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee repairing their nets. When he called them,

Mat 4:22 they immediately left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus comes to our level and uses our gifts to expand the kingdom. The Lord spins the God-given gift in an unexpected way and puts us to work; we just need to follow.

Unfortunately, as the game clip depicts there are sharks in the water that want the catch of the day as well.

Let's look at Matthew 13: 1-23

Mat 13:1 That day Jesus left the house and sat down beside the sea.

Mat 13:2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the entire crowd stood on the shore.

Mat 13:3 Then he began to tell them many things in parables. He said, "**Listen! A farmer went out to sow.**

Mat 13:4 As he was sowing, some seeds fell along the path, and birds came and ate them up.

Mat 13:5 Other seeds fell on stony ground, where they did not have a lot of soil. They sprouted at once because the soil wasn't deep.

Mat 13:6 But when the sun came up, they were scorched. Since they did not have any roots, they dried up.

Mat 13:7 Other seeds fell among thorn bushes, and the thorn bushes grew higher and choked them out.

Mat 13:8 But other seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop, some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown.

Mat 13:9 Let the person who has ears listen!"

The Purpose of the Parables

Mat 13:10 Then the disciples came and asked Jesus, "Why do you speak to people in parables?"

Mat 13:11 He answered them, "You have been given knowledge about the secrets of the kingdom from heaven, but it hasn't been given to them,

Mat 13:12 because to anyone who has something, more will be given, and he will have more than

enough. But from the one who doesn't have anything, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Mat 13:13 That's why I speak to them in parables, because 'they look but don't see, and they listen but don't hear or understand.'

Mat 13:14 "With them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says: 'You will listen and listen but never understand. You will look and look but never comprehend,

Mat 13:15 for this people's heart has become dull, and their ears are hard of hearing. They have shut their eyes so that they might not see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'

Mat 13:16 "How blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear!

Mat 13:17 I tell you with certainty, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but did not see them, and to hear the things you hear but did not hear them."

The Parable of the Sower Explained

Mat 13:18 "Listen, then, to the parable about the farmer.

Mat 13:19 When anyone hears the word about the kingdom yet doesn't understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

Mat 13:20 As for what was sown on the stony ground, this is the person who hears the word and accepts it joyfully at once,

Mat 13:21 but since he doesn't have any root in himself, he lasts for only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes along because of the word, he immediately falls away.

Mat 13:22 As for what was sown among the thorn bushes, this is the person who hears the word, but the worries of life and the deceitful pleasures of wealth choke the word so that it can't produce a crop.

Mat 13:23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word, understands it, and produces a crop that yields 100, 60, or 30 times what was sown."

This is another way of using common things to go to a disciple's level. This time, Jesus uses agriculture, locations, and results that people would relate to.

4: The Games' Take On The Parable Of The Sower And Bible Study # 3:

The path is kind of like the shark in the water trying to eat your catch in the game Fishing Derby. This shark is opportunistic and tries to get the easy meal before the fish are truly landed. The Devil is this shark and he stops at nothing to frustrate our witnessing efforts.

As far as the stony soil goes, think of an untilled or unfurrowed field that hasn't been worked on yet. The topsoil isn't able to be penetrated well because it is filled with rocks and other debris, roots just can't grow very well. Things will spring up and then not last. As soon as repeated hot days happen, the chances of survival is very low.

Let's look at what needs to happen so spiritual disaster doesn't strike a new convert and the faith is lost.

We will now look at Psalm 92, Jeremiah 17: 7-8, Colossians 2: 6-15.

Psa 92:1 A Psalm. A song for the Sabbath Day. It is good to give thanks to the LORD and to sing praise to your name, Most High;

Psa 92:2 to proclaim your gracious love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,

Psa 92:3 accompanied by a ten-stringed instrument and a lyre, and the contemplative sound of a harp.

Psa 92:4 Because you made me glad with your awesome deeds, LORD, I will sing for joy at the works of your hands.

Psa 92:5 How great are your works, LORD! Your thoughts are unfathomable.

Psa 92:6 A stupid man doesn't know, and a fool can't comprehend this:

Psa 92:7 Though the wicked sprout like grass; and

all who practice iniquity flourish, it is they who will be eternally destroyed.

Psa 92:8 But you are exalted forever, LORD.

Psa 92:9 Look at your enemies, LORD! Look at your enemies, for they are destroyed; everyone who practices iniquity will be scattered.

Psa 92:10 You've grown my strength like the horn of a wild ox; I was anointed with fresh oil.

Psa 92:11 My eyes gloated over those who lie in wait for me; when those of evil intent attack me, my ears will hear.

Psa 92:12 The righteous will flourish like palm trees; they will grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

Psa 92:13 Planted in the LORD's Temple, they will flourish in the courtyard of our God.

Psa 92:14 They will still bear fruit even in old age; they will be luxuriant and green.

Psa 92:15 They will proclaim: "The LORD is upright; my rock, in whom there is no injustice."

Jer 17:7 Blessed is the person who trusts in the LORD, making the LORD his trust.

Jer 17:8 He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by a stream. He won't fear when the heat comes, and his leaves will be green. In a year of drought he won't be concerned, nor will he stop producing fruit."

Col 2:6 So then, just as you have received the Messiah Jesus the Lord, continue to live dependent on him.

Col 2:7 For you have been rooted in him and are being built up and strengthened in the faith, just as you were taught, while you continue to be thankful.

Col 2:8 See to it that no one enslaves you through philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to the Messiah,

Col 2:9 because all the essence of deity inhabits him in bodily form.

Col 2:10 And you have been filled by him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

Col 2:11 In union with him you were also circumcised with a circumcision performed without human hands by stripping off the corrupt nature by

the circumcision performed by the Messiah.

Col 2:12 When you were buried with the Messiah in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Col 2:13 Even when you were dead because of your offenses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with him when he forgave us all of our offenses,

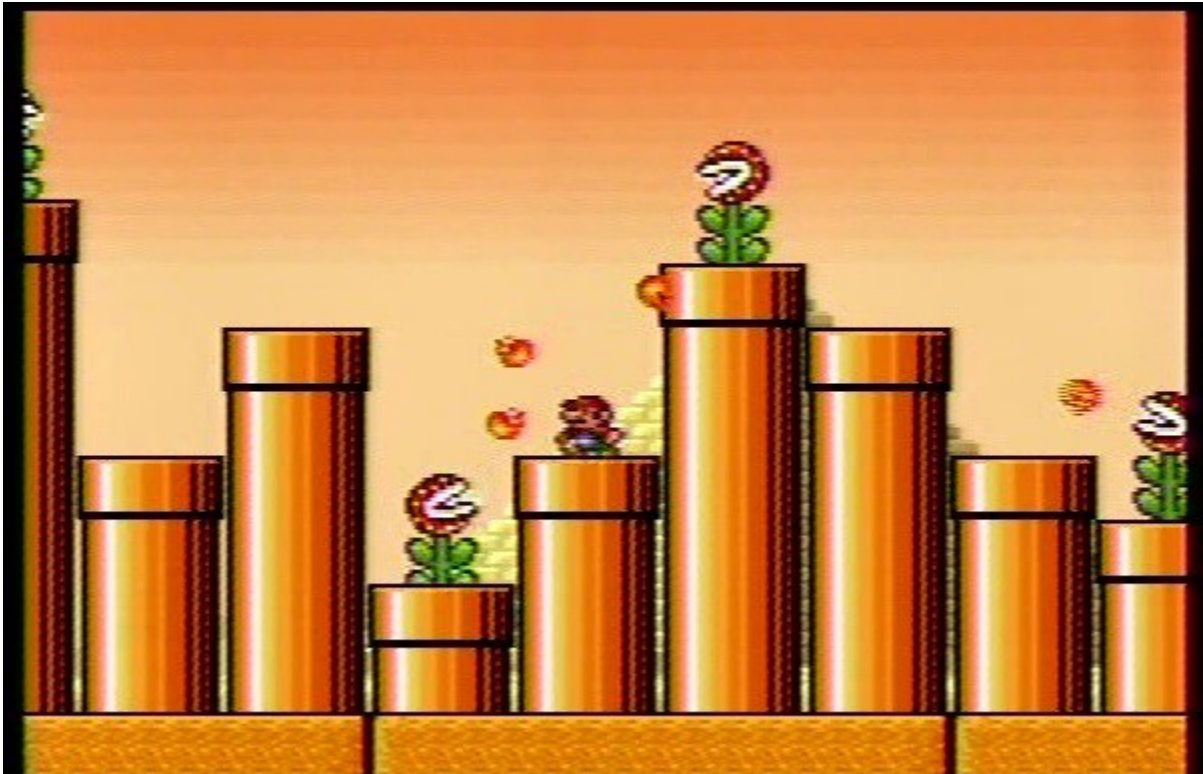
Col 2:14 having erased the charges that were brought against us, along with their obligations that were hostile to us. He took those charges away when he nailed them to the cross.

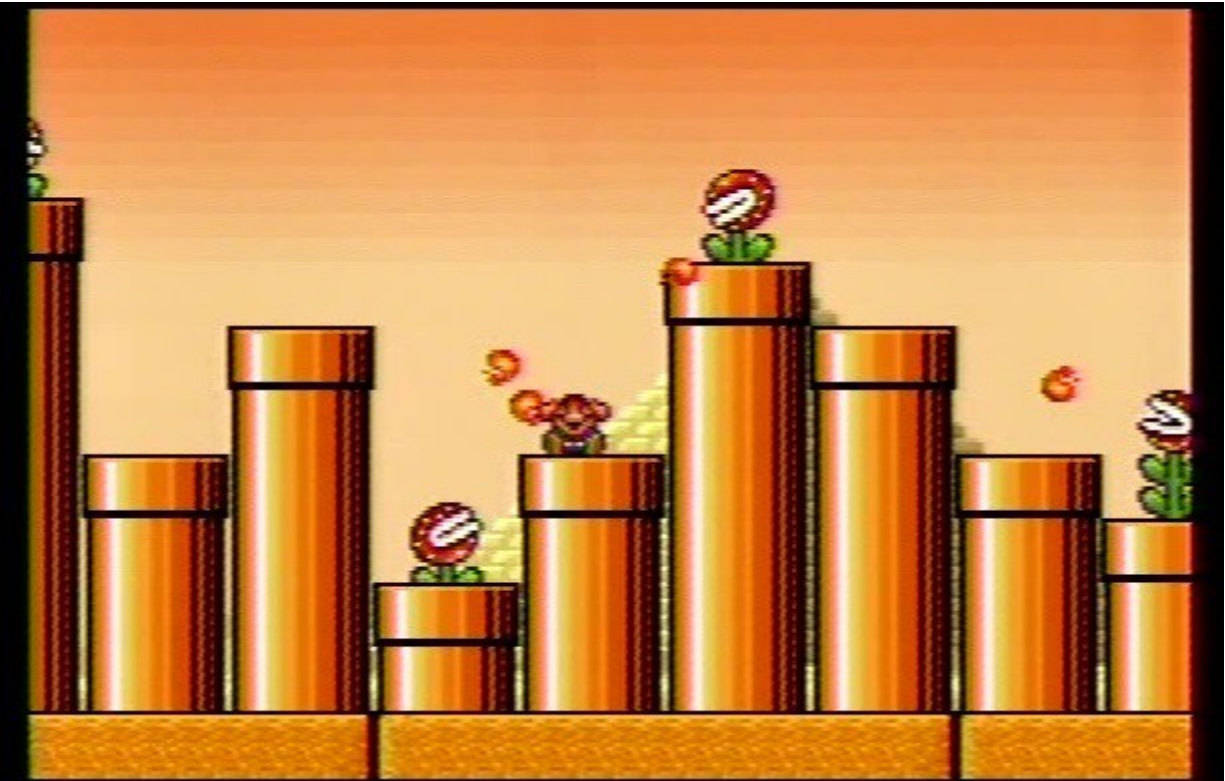
Col 2:15 And when he had disarmed the rulers and the authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in the cross.

So, if we allow ourselves to be molded by Jesus, we will be deeply rooted in eternal life (unlike the stony soil). We will have the deep nourishing type of soil that we need to grow up right.

Now, let's look at the thorns. Look at these pictures.







Note: The first two screenshots are from NES: Super Mario Bros. 3—World 7-2; the last two are from SNES: Super Mario All-Stars: Super Mario Bros. 3—Level 7-2.

I want to point out the story in pictures; think of the first picture as the seed that falls among the thorns. These villains are called Pirana Plants and are trapping the currently “Fire Mario.” Fire is often used for the Holy Spirit Biblically speaking, but watch what happens during this time; with every picture Mario is shrinking and has no more fire and

then cowers and dies. This is what not being ground in Jesus does to us.

How then must we act?

We have to be courageous and not be so concerned about those things that try to hamper the gospel. When we teach or preach we will endure many hardships.

Look at Matthew 6: 25-34

Mat 6:25 "That's why I'm telling you to stop worrying about your life—what you will eat or what you will drink—or about your body—what you will wear. Life is more than food, isn't it, and the body more than clothing?

Mat 6:26 Look at the birds in the sky. They don't plant or harvest or gather food into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. You are more valuable than they are, aren't you?

Mat 6:27 Can any of you add a single hour to the

length of your life by worrying?

Mat 6:28 And why do you worry about clothes? Consider the lilies in the field and how they grow. They don't work or spin yarn,

Mat 6:29 but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them.

Mat 6:30 Now if that is the way God clothes the grass in the field, which is alive today and thrown into an oven tomorrow, won't he clothe you much better—you who have little faith?

Mat 6:31 "So don't ever worry by saying, 'What are we going to eat?' or 'What are we going to drink?' or 'What are we going to wear?'

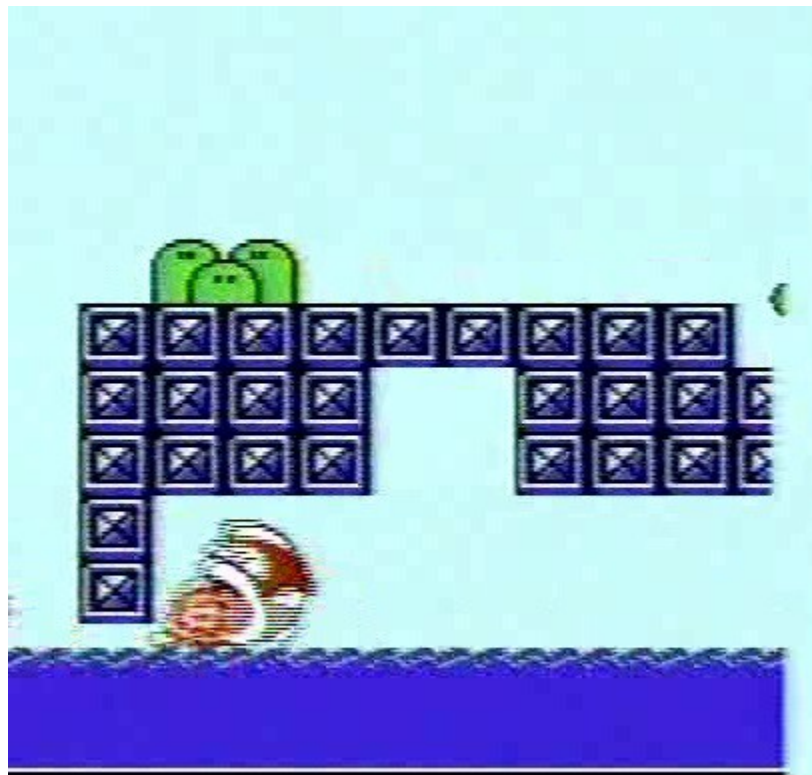
Mat 6:32 because it is the gentiles who are eager for all those things. Surely your heavenly Father knows that you need all of them!

Mat 6:33 But first be concerned about God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all of these things will be provided for you as well.

Mat 6:34 So never worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

If we worry, then we have basically have lost already because the bad guys have the upper hand unless God intervenes (I have been here before, like everyone else). We must have faith enough to endure uncertainty and even our worry. God provides help in abundance by intervening with people that care or circumstances that teach lessons about faith. We will learn from our mistakes; trust, faith and wisdom will take over more and more as we serve God longer. We will not be disappointed.

Don't let your catch eat you either.



Note: The above pictures are from NES: Super Mario Bros. 3—World 3-3 and 3-8 respectively.

The above pictures show a bad fish named Big Bertha. Big Bertha loves to eat men whole (especially a Mario). The Devil is much like Big Bertha in the fact that he likes to eat God's servants especially because like Big Bertha being a sworn enemy of Mario, the Devil is definitely a sworn enemy of us humans and God especially.

Let's look at 1 Peter 5: 6-11

1Pe 5:6 Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

1Pe 5:7 Throw all your worry on him, because he cares for you.

1Pe 5:8 Be clear-minded and alert. Your opponent, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

1Pe 5:9 Resist him and be firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

1Pe 5:10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you by the Messiah Jesus to his eternal glory, will restore you, establish you, strengthen you, and support you.

1Pe 5:11 Power belongs to him forever and ever! Amen.

Now about the good soil, in Fishing Derby, the final score was 99-34. This may seem to be a blow out and in this game it is. However look at it this way, If we do our job correctly, we are going to help win people over to Christ, if not, then we will be instrumental to someone that does lead those people to Christ by helping to make them understand the kindness of God. We will always be helpful to make a profit for the kingdom and help people strengthen faith at least—this is equally important to help guard those under attack so the kingdom does not take losses. If I help to bring in

around 100 people to Jesus, but my wife Bonnie only helps to bring in around 30, then we are both doing our job and doing it well.

5: Bible Study # 4 And Closing Thoughts:

So, this is what we are supposed to do as we look at Mark 16: 15-16, 2 Timothy 1: 7-9; 4: 1-5, 1 John 1: 1-4, Luke 24: 36-49, Acts 1: 1-8 and Romans 10: 5-18. There are 3 things we need to remember.

1: Be Brave

2Ti 1:7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity but one of power, love, and self-discipline.

2Ti 1:8 Therefore, never be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, his prisoner. Instead, by God's power, join me in suffering for the sake of the gospel.

2Ti 1:9 He saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own accomplishments, but according to his own purpose and the grace that was given to us in the Messiah Jesus before time began.

2: Preach to the world

Mar 16:15 Then he told them, "As you go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to everyone.

Mar 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever doesn't believe will be condemned.

2Ti 4:1 In the presence of God and the Messiah Jesus, who is going to judge those who are living and those who are dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly appeal to you

2Ti 4:2 to proclaim the message. Be ready to do

this whether or not the time is convenient. Refute, warn, and encourage with the utmost patience when you teach.

2Ti 4:3 For the time will come when people will not tolerate healthy doctrine, but with itching ears will surround themselves with teachers who cater to their people's own desires.

2Ti 4:4 They will refuse to listen to the truth and will turn to myths.

2Ti 4:5 But you must be clear-headed about everything. Endure suffering. Do the work of an evangelist. Devote yourself completely to your ministry.

Luk 24:36 While they were all talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and told them, "Peace be with you."

Luk 24:37 They were startled and terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost.

Luk 24:38 But Jesus told them, "What's frightening you? And why are you doubting?"

Luk 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet, because it's really me. Touch me and look at me, because a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

Luk 24:40 After he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Luk 24:41 Even though they were still skeptical due to their joy and astonishment, Jesus asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

Luk 24:42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,
Luk 24:43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Luk 24:44 Then he told them, "These are the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled."

Luk 24:45 Then he opened their minds so that they might understand the Scriptures.

Luk 24:46 He told them, "This is how it is written: the Messiah was to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

Luk 24:47 and then repentance and forgiveness of

sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

Luk 24:49 I am sending to you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Act 1:1 In my first book, Theophilus, I wrote about everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning,

Act 1:2 up to the day when he was taken up to heaven after giving orders by the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

Act 1:3 After he had suffered, he had shown himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during a period of 40 days and telling them about the kingdom of God.

Act 1:4 While he was meeting with them, he ordered them, "Don't leave Jerusalem. Instead, wait for what the Father has promised, about which you heard me speak.

Act 1:5 For John baptized with water, but you will

be baptized with the Holy Spirit a few days from now."

Act 1:6 Now those who had gathered together began to ask Jesus, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Act 1:7 He answered them, "It is not for you to know what times or periods the Father has fixed by his own authority.

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

3: Witness With Personal Testimony, it's the most powerful thing you have in Jesus Christ.

Rom 10:5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from the Law as follows: "The person who obeys these things will find life by them."

Rom 10:6 But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (that is, to bring the Messiah down),

Rom 10:7 or 'Who will go down into the depths?' (that is, to bring the Messiah back from the dead)."

Rom 10:8 But what does it say? "The message is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart." This is the message about faith that we are proclaiming:

Rom 10:9 If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Rom 10:10 For one believes with his heart and is justified, and declares with his mouth and is saved.

Rom 10:11 The Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will never be ashamed."

Rom 10:12 There is no difference between Jew and Greek, because they all have the same Lord, who gives richly to all who call on him.

Rom 10:13 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Rom 10:14 How, then, can people call on someone they have not believed? And how can they believe in someone they have not heard about? And how can they hear without someone preaching?

Rom 10:15 And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are those who bring the good news!"

Rom 10:16 But not everyone has obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah asks, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

Rom 10:17 Consequently, faith results from listening, and listening results through the word of the Messiah.

Rom 10:18 But I ask, "Didn't they hear?" Certainly they did! In fact, "Their voice has gone out into the whole world, and their words to the ends of the earth."

1Jn 1:1 What existed from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we observed and touched with our own hands—this is the Word of life!

1Jn 1:2 This life was revealed to us, and we have seen it and testify about it. We declare to you this eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us.

1Jn 1:3 What we have seen and heard we declare to you so that you, too, can have fellowship with us. Now this fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus, the Messiah.

1Jn 1:4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be full.

What have we learned?

We must be ready with the good news day and night, we must never be afraid, if we mess up then God will give instruction and more chances. God needs to be dependend on for all things we need and we must be on the lookout for what He gives. Resist the devil, because he isn't going to win. We will become more and more powerful as witnesses the longer we serve Jesus in the right way and God will have favor on everything for His kingdom's sake.

Closing Prayer