



Hope  
In  
The  
LORD



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## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

*AME Discipline*

SAMPLE



# Glorious Riches

Lesson Scripture: Colossians 1:19-2:5

Focus Scripture: Colossians 1:24-2:3

**KEY VERSES:** I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Colossians 2:2-3

## WORDS TO KNOW

**RECONCILE** – to restore friendly relations between us and God

**PEACE** – a state of harmony

**ESTRANGED** – no longer close to God; alienated

**IRREPROACHABLE** – without fault and therefore impossible to criticize

**COMMISSION** – when God chooses someone to do a special ministry

**PLAUSIBLE** – statements that seem likely to be valid

**LAODICEA** – pronounced: lay – o – dih – SEE – uh

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: COLOSSIANS 1:24–2:3*

- 24** I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church.
- 25** I became its minister according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known,
- 26** the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints.
- 27** To them God chose to make known how great among the gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- 28** It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.
- 29** For this I toil and strive with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.
- 2:1** For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you and for those in Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face.
- 2** I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ,
- 3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## INTRODUCTION

During this June-August quarter, we will focus on the title, *Hope in the Lord*. We explore expressions of Christian hope both in this present age and the glorious future God is preparing for us. The five lessons of Unit I, “Experiencing Hope,” consider Christian hope through the lens of those whose faith in Christ gave shape to the early church. Lessons draw on New Testament passages from Colossians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Hebrews, and Acts. In Lesson 1, Paul tells the Colossians that the mysteries of God become known to them as their hope in Christ transforms their lives (Colossians 1:27).

*How do you interpret personal suffering? Does suffering leave you feeling defeated or hopeful for a better future? What gives you hope for your generation and those to come?*

## BIBLE STORY

Paul’s letter to the Colossians was written while he was in prison in Rome. Paul had never visited Colosse. The church had been founded by Epaphras and other converts of Paul’s missionary journeys. Paul had to combat the false teachings that had infiltrated the Colossian church. The believers were combining ideas from other religions (e.g.: paganism; Greek thought; parts of Judaism) and philosophies with Christian truth. It was later known as “Gnosticism,” which emphasized special knowledge and denied Christ as God and Savior. To combat these false teachings, Paul stressed Christ’s deity which connected him to the Father, and his sacrificial death on the cross for our sins.

Only by being connected to Christ through faith can anyone have eternal life. And an ongoing personal relationship with Christ is the key to power for living. Christ is God incarnate and the only way to forgiveness and peace with God the Father. Paul also emphasized the importance of knowing that Christ is the “image of the invisible God,” the Creator, the “head of the body, the church,” and the “firstborn from the dead” (1:15 – 18). Christ’s death on the cross makes it possible for us to stand in the presence of God (1:22).

Paul rejoiced in his suffering while in prison. God had commissioned him to preach the Word to the people. Therefore, Paul committed himself to ministering the Gospel for the benefit of the Colossians. The preaching of the Word of God allowed Paul to reveal the “mystery,” the divine truth of God. The mystery had been revealed to previous generations, and it is now revealed through the Apostle Paul’s preaching. It contains “the glorious riches” of God’s glory among the Gentiles, involving their salvation. The epitome of this mystery is “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” which is the truth that the crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ dwells in the believer (1:27). Christ is formed in the “new creation” (Gal. 2:20; 4:19; 1 Jn. 4:12). The indwelling Christ is the believer’s ‘hope of glory,’ since the believer is identified with him and made one with him in life as well as glorification in heaven for eternity.

The error in teachings is in reality a demonic attack against God’s truth (2:1 – 2; 1 Tim. 4:1 – 5). Paul’s words in his letter were to expose the errors and bring unity amongst the believers in Colosse and Laodicea through the truth of God’s Word. Believers can have full assurance of salvation through the grace of God in Christ. In Christ is the fullness of the Godhead who became incarnate for the redemption of humanity. Within Christ is “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3; Eph. 1:9). Christ is the answer to all error (1 John 4:2 – 3). Paul is urging the believers to make Christ the focal point of their lives, conduct, and principles. Just like when they first received Christ.

*What was causing problems in the church? How did Paul urge the believers to resolve it?*

## SANKOFA



**Mary Church Terrell** was a civil rights and women’s rights activist. She was born on September 23, 1863, in Memphis, Tennessee. She was one of the first African American women to attend Oberlin College in Ohio, earning an undergraduate degree in Classics in 1884, and a graduate degree in Education in 1888. Terrell taught at



Wilberforce College in Xenia, Ohio, and then relocated to Washington, D.C. in 1887 to teach at the M Street High School.

Terrell was heavily involved in the Black Women's Club Movement. She served as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), an organization that fought for voting rights and equal rights with the motto "lifting as we climb." Terrell was also instrumental in the founding and advancement of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Association of College Women, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. Throughout her club involvement, Terrell continued educating pupils at the now-renamed Dunbar High School and was appointed superintendent of the school in 1895.

Terrell was a notable black leader in the suffragettes' movement, as well as the civil rights movement during the first part of the twentieth century. She advocated and wrote many articles and poems in major publications and newspapers on the topics of race, and gender, and promoted the Club Movement, often using the pen name Euphemia Kirk. Her most influential works include *A Colored Woman in a White World* and "What it means to be Colored in the Capital of the United States." In 1950, Mary Church Terrell was involved in a successful lawsuit that led to the desegregation of D.C. area restaurants. She also succeeded in pushing her local chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) to allow African Americans to join its association.

Mary Church Terrell died in 1954 at 90, in Highland Beach, Maryland.

*How did the struggles Mary Church Terrell faced as an African American woman compel her into action with the hope of a better future for all women of color? What can you do to ensure a better future for yourself and others?*

Source: <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/individuals/mary-church-terrell>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

The Reverend Jesse Jackson, long before he became a minister, was head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference’s Operation Breadbasket, Operation PUSH (People United to Save Humanity), and founder of the Rainbow Coalition. During the civil rights movement, Rev. Jackson was very active in securing civil rights for all people. He often used two phrases when speaking: “I am somebody!” and “Keep hope alive!” Think about these phrases and why he used them to encourage people. Think of two phrases to encourage those suffering today and explain why you chose them.

Rev. Jesse Jackson: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Today: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do believers have hope in Christ no matter their circumstances? How has God given you hope while suffering? How can we share this hope with others—with words and without words?

Words of Hope – \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hope Without Words – \_\_\_\_\_

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## **SUMMARY**

Hope can easily be given and taken away based on our life circumstances. But if we believe in Jesus Christ and accept him as our Lord and Savior, our hope is secure. We know for sure that God is with us and our destination for eternity is heaven. We will forever be in Christ's presence and have transformed, glorified bodies. Therefore, no matter our personal, church, or world crises, we can look up and have hope. God often uses suffering to help us spiritually grow.

*What lessons can we learn from the Colossian church? How do we deal with church discord? Who can guide us when hope seems lost? How can we have peace with God in our lives?*

## **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

*Prayer: God, my hope is in you today, tomorrow, and the future. Amen.*

*Song: AMECH #364 "My Hope Is Built"*

## APPENDIX A: MAP OF LAODICEA



<https://www.bibleinfo.com/en/questions/laodicea>

# Bold Ministers

Lesson Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Focus Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:5-18

**KEY VERSE:** All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

## WORDS TO KNOW

**COMPETENCE** – *the ability to do something successfully*

**MINISTERS** – *God's servants who share the Gospel*

**NEW COVENANT** – *God's agreement that is designed for all people, not just for Israel; Christ is the mediator of the new covenant and the Holy Spirit is the administrator of it (Jer. 31:31; Heb. 8:6 – 13; 9:1; 12:24; John 7:39)*

**GLORY** – *to honor, praise*

**CONDEMNATION** – *one without faith in Christ is seen as one who is judged with disapproval by God*

**JUSTIFICATION** – *receiving mercy and forgiveness of sins by having faith in Christ with complete submission to the will of God*

**VEIL** – *figuratively used to mean ignorance and hardness of heart*

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-18*

- 5 Not that we are qualified of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our qualification is from God,
- 6 who has made us qualified to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- 7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses's face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside
- 8 how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory?
- 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory!
- 10 Indeed, what once had glory has in this respect lost its glory because of the greater glory,
- 11 for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!
- 12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with complete frankness,
- 13 not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside.
- 14 But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, the same veil is still there; it is not unveiled since in Christ it is set aside.
- 15 Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds,
- 16 but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.
- 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
- 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

## INTRODUCTION

The second letter of Paul to the Corinthians was written to affirm his ministry, defend his authority as an apostle, and negate the false teachers in Corinth. This letter was dated about A.D. 55 – 57, from Macedonia. This was an intensely personal and autobiographical letter.

Paul had already written three letters to the Corinthians (two are now lost). In 1 Corinthians (the second letter), he used strong language to correct and instruct the people. Most of the church had responded in the right spirit. But the church was being troubled by those who denied the apostle's authority and questioned his motives.

In today's lesson, we explore how to boldly proclaim the Gospel amid personal challenges.

*When challenged about your beliefs, how do you respond? How can you help those who are in denial about the truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?*

## BIBLE STORY

Paul defended his authority by stating God accredited his ministry (3:4 – 6). Those who doubted could look at Paul's Damascus Road experience (Acts 9). It was God who initiated the encounter. Paul's source was God who enabled him to be a minister of the Gospel. He did not have the power to minister under his strength. It was "by grace, he was saved through faith" (Eph. 2:8).

The message of grace is spiritual and life-giving. As the Gospel of grace energized the Holy Spirit, it is contrasted with the law of Moses, a code written on stone. The minister of the new covenant gains powers not from the old covenant's letter of the law, which only shows our death and convicts us of sin, but from the spirit of God, which brings eternal life.

The old legal covenant is referred to as "the ministry that brought

death.” It condemns men and points out our sins. In contrast, the new covenant of grace is called “the ministry of the Spirit” and “the ministry that brings righteousness.” It gives life and provides for the removal of our sins. The old covenant is written on stones and is glorious. On the other hand, the new covenant is written on the human heart and is even more glorious. Paul had witnesses who could testify of their transformed lives through his witness.

*How does one become a part of the new covenant? What does it mean to have “the new covenant engraved onto our hearts?” What part does the Holy Spirit have in the new covenant?*

## SANKOFA



**David Walker (1785 – 1830)** The fiery-militant David Walker was born on September 28, 1785, in Wilmington, North Carolina. His father was an enslaved African who died a few months before his son’s birth, and his mother was a free woman of African ancestry. Walker grew up to despise the system of slavery that the U.S. government allowed in America. He knew the cruelties of slavery were not for him and said, “As true as God reigns, I will be avenged for the sorrow which my people have suffered.” He eventually moved to Boston during the 1820s and became very active within the free black community. Walker’s intense hatred for slavery culminated in his publishing his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in September 1829. The *Appeal* was smuggled into the southern states and was considered subversive, seditious, and incendiary by most white men in both northern and southern states. It was, without a doubt, one of the most controversial documents published in the antebellum period.

Walker was concerned about many social issues affecting free and enslaved Africans in America during the time. He also expressed many beliefs that would become commonly promoted by later black nationalists such as a unified struggle for resistance to oppression (slavery), land reparations, self-government for people of African descent in America, racial pride, and a critique



of American capitalism. His radical views prompted southern planters to offer a \$3000 bounty for anyone who killed Walker and a \$10,000 reward for anyone who returned him alive back to the South. Walker was found dead in the doorway of his Boston home in 1830. Some people believed he was poisoned and others believed that he died of tuberculosis.

*Based on what we have read: How did David Walker demonstrate confidence in his beliefs? How did he act with boldness? Do you think others felt hopeful when they read his pamphlet? How willing are you to act with boldness regardless of the outcome?*

Source: Asukile, T. (2007, January 17). David Walker (1785-1830). BlackPast.org. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/walker-david-1785-1830/>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Using the acronym for the word BOLDNESS, please write down words that define the meaning of boldness.

B \_\_\_\_\_

O \_\_\_\_\_

L \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

N \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_

Using your cell phone, look for four pictures/images on social media that reflect life without Christ and take a screenshot. Also,

look for four pictures/images that demonstrate the freedom of life with Christ and take a screenshot. Create two collages with images that reflect life without Christ and life with Christ. *The class will discuss the images and identify why they chose the photos/images. Brainstorm how we can act boldly as witnesses for Christ.* (NOTE: No images of nudity, foul language, or abuse can be used!) (If there is no access to cell phones, magazines and newspapers can be used. The pictures/images will be glued onto the posterboard.)

## SUMMARY

Paul had to defend his call from God and authority to minister. False teachers will often stir up others to act ungodly based on the negative information shared. Those opposing Paul had no basis for their accusations. Paul's conversion experience and ministry served as the true witnesses of his authority. He spoke boldly on behalf of Christ and himself. Paul understood the repercussions but stood for the truth of God's Word.

*How do we proclaim truth boldly in the face of such challenges? When we are in difficult situations, how can we know the Holy Spirit is present with us?*

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Prayer: God, give me the spiritual strength to speak boldly against injustices in the world and share the gospel with all who will listen. Amen.*

*Song: AMECH# 83 "O Thou, in Whose Presence"*

# Empowered Servants

Lesson Scripture: Romans 15:1-13

Focus Scripture: Romans 15:1-13

**KEY VERSES:** May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:5-6

## WORDS TO KNOW

**STEADFASTNESS** – *the quality of being resolutely firm and unwavering in faith*

**HOPE** – *to desire or have an expectation*

**HARMONY** – *to be in agreement and one accord with others*

**GLORIFY** – *to honor, magnify*

**PATRIARCHS** – *heads of a family or tribe*

**MERCY** – *kindness; forgiveness shown by God towards us instead of punishment*

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 15:1-13*

- 1 We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.
- 2 Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor.
- 3 For Christ did not please himself, but, as it is written, “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”
- 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.
- 5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus,
- 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
- 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors
- 9 and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name”;
- 10 and again he says, “Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;
- 11 and again, “Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”;
- 12 and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope.”
- 13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Romans was written to introduce himself and share what message would be given when he arrived. The time was about A.D. 57. The letter came from Paul while he was still in Corinth and preparing to visit Jerusalem. Paul had finished his work in the East, and he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain after first bringing a collection to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there. The Roman church was mostly Jewish but also contained a great number of Gentiles. In the first part of the letter Paul sets forth the foundations of the Christian faith (1:1 - 11:36). In the second part, Paul gives clear, practical guidelines for the believers in Rome (12:1 - 16:27).

Our world is full of division and hate. There are political groups that are constantly calling each other names and showing hate between people. In school, there are groups of athletes, computer geeks, cheerleaders, choir and drama clubs, etc. There are social clubs such as fraternities and sororities, Jack and Jill, Masons, Eastern Stars, etc. There is racial strife and religious fighting. Our churches have hierarchies and cliques. The rich look down upon the poor.

*What would the world be like if we treated each other with kindness and respect?* In today's lesson, Paul urges believers to be kind towards others so that we can live in harmony as we serve God.

## BIBLE STORY

Our text today in chapter 15, verses 1 through 13, discusses how to live to please others to build them up for good as well as be in fellowship with one another. Paul is not calling us to become people pleasers. We must sacrifice personal liberties for the sake of others. The strong believer ought to put up with the failings of the weaker believer. Christ is our model in this matter (v. 3). The way to know more about God is through reading and studying the scriptures. The Word gives us hope for today and the future.

God also grants us the ability to live in harmony with one

another (v. 5). When we emulate Christ, it means we love others as he loves us. As we spiritually grow, our loving attitude towards others does as well. Then we can glorify and praise God together as one body of believers. We cannot exclude certain believers based on our own perceived ideas about them. Just as Christ welcomed us, we are to welcome others (v. 7).

God's plan embraces the extension of the Gospel to the entire globe in which both Jews and Gentiles are glorifying God. Christ came to bring the truth to the Jews (circumcised) and to show that God is true to his promises. The "root of Jesse" refers to Christ being the heir from the family line of Jesse, David's father (v. 12; 1 Sam. 16:1). Paul uses the promises from the Old Testament to show God's goal in the future kingdom is for all the earth's nations to join in glorifying God the Father. Verse 13 is a benediction of hope.

*How is the Word a means for unifying the body of believers? How is mercy a sign of spiritual maturity?*

## SANKOFA



**United States Colored Troops (1863 – 1865)** [pictured, Fourth U.S. Infantry Detail]. The United States Colored Troops (USCT) was the designation given to the approximately 175 regiments of non-white soldiers who served during the Civil War. The troops were primarily African American, but Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders were all included within the ranks, as well. By the end of the war, nearly a tenth of the entire Union Army consisted of members of the USCT, which peaked at 178,000 individuals. These regiments were the precursors for the now-famous Buffalo Soldiers who served throughout the West following the conclusion of the war.

Before January 1, 1863, when the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, President Abraham Lincoln was cautious about the recruitment of African Americans into the Union Army,

due to politics and prejudice throughout the North, especially among Democrats loyal to the Union who resided in the border states that allowed slavery. Once January 1 came, however, and the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect, full-scale recruitment of black troops began.

In May 1863, the United States War Department created the Bureau of Colored Troops, and the USCT was officially established. The USCT consisted of 135 regiments of infantry soldiers, six regiments of cavalry, one regiment of light artillery, and 13 regiments of heavy artillery. An additional nineteen thousand African Americans served in the United States Navy. Furthermore, thousands of black women, who were not allowed to formally enlist, worked for the military as cooks, spies, nurses, and scouts; the most famous of these women was Harriet Tubman.

The United States Colored Troops fought in every major military campaign and battle the Union Army was involved in during the last two years of the Civil War. These included three of the costliest battles of the entire war, the Battle of Nashville, the Battle of Chickamauga, both in Tennessee, and the Battle of Spotsylvania Courthouse in Virginia. Throughout the war, the USCT suffered a total of 68,178 casualties while contributing to the Union victory. Moreover, members of the USCT received numerous awards and commendations from the United States Government, including a total of eighteen Congressional Medals of Honor, the highest award a member of the armed forces can receive.

Racial discrimination, which was ever-present, even in the North, infiltrated the army during this time. Almost all of the black troops were led by white officers, some of whom were not happy with their assignment. For some time, black soldiers, who were asked to perform no fewer duties than their white compatriots, earned a net pay of \$7 a month, while whites earned \$13. This was the case from 1863 until mid-1864 when Congress passed a law requiring equal pay to those in the military, regardless of race, along with retroactive payments to those who had been discriminated against. African American prisoners of war were

also given much harsher treatment by the Confederacy than white captives.

In the fall of 1865, several months after the Civil War ended, the USCT was disbanded, as were the vast majority of troops who fought in the war. President Lincoln himself was quoted as saying, “Without the military help of the black freedmen, the war against the South could not have been won.” The legacy of the USCT resides in the U.S. 9th and 10th Cavalry, as well as the 24th and 25th Infantry, regiments of African American troops known as the Buffalo Soldiers who served in the West in the post-Civil War period.

At the start of the American Civil War, many black soldiers were not U.S. citizens. *What were their hopes while participating in the war and sacrificing for themselves and others? How is the Civil War and the Juneteenth celebration connected?*

Source: Mouser, J. (2017, July 22). *The United States Colored Troops (1863-1865)*. BlackPast.org. <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/united-states-colored-troops-1863-1865/>

## **REAL TALK, FAITH WALK**

Do you recall ever being excluded? How did it make you feel? What was your reaction?

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Think about those things that divide people in the world. Write some of them below.

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Think about ways to unite people. Write some of your ideas next to the united people below.



## SUMMARY

In the body of Christ, there are many diverse cultures and nationalities. Our way of viewing the world and serving God may not be the same as other believers. We do not exclude people because of differences. Christ looks beyond our differences and accepts all who come to him by faith. When we study the Word, the mercy of God is evident throughout the ages. Kindness can transform the world. We must do the same so that in one harmony God can be glorified throughout the world.

Hope is inspired in those around us when they see the salvation that is being worked out in us by the Holy Spirit. We can act today to start giving hope and encouragement to others. First, we all know someone who may need encouragement. Send a text to them to offer support and hope. And second, consider a special project the class can collaborate on to uplift the community and/or schools.

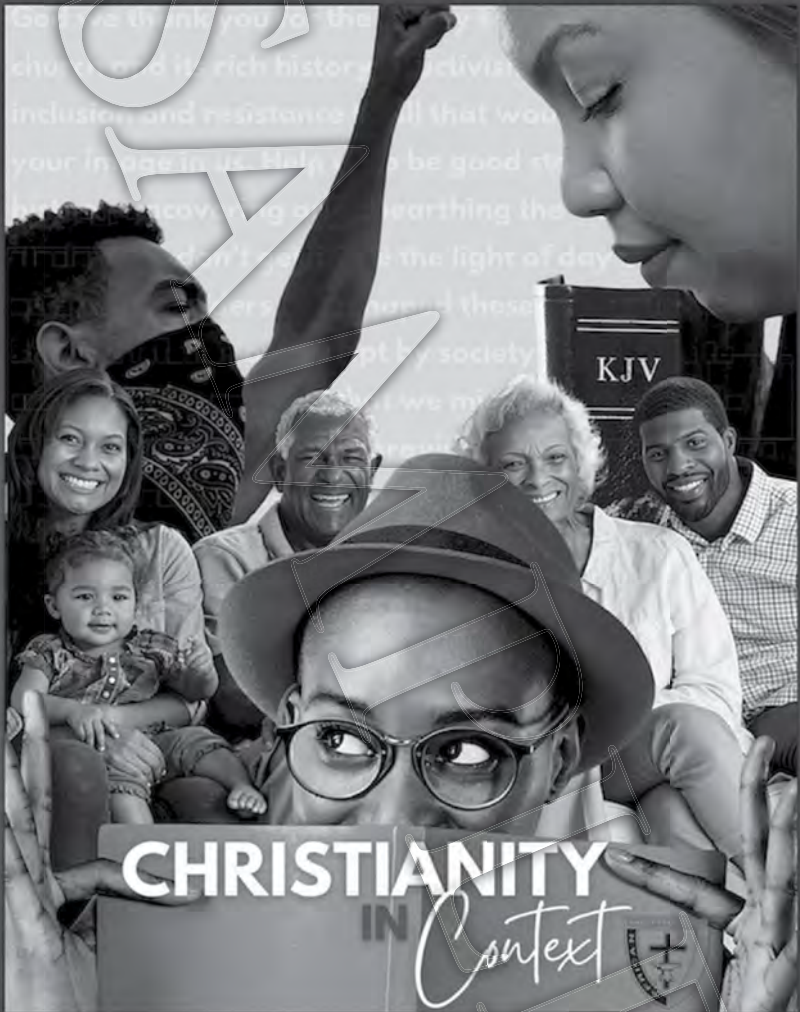
*What was Paul concerned about in his letter to the Romans? Who did Paul urge to change their ways? How did Paul use the promises of God in the Word to enlighten the believers?*

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Prayer: God, forgive me for thinking only about myself. I often excluded other believers without taking into consideration their feelings. God help me to be kind and loving. Amen.*

Song: AMECH # 558 "Help Us Accept Each Other"

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