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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*

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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

## VOCABULARY

*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 shaped the early church. 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).

The United States criminal justice system is often seen as unjust towards the poor and people of color. If you cannot afford to hire a personal lawyer, the representation you receive in the courtroom may not be the best. Sometimes innocent youth and adults spend years in prison due to inadequate representation. This is unjust and organizations such as

The Innocence Project (<https://innocenceproject.org>) are fighting for the rights of the innocent.

*How do you feel about unjust systems and personal suffering? Do you feel change can come in the future? What gives you hope that real justice can be achieved?*

## BIBLE STORY

Paul's letter to the Colossians was written while he was in prison in Rome. Paul had never visited Colossae. Converts of Paul's missionary journeys had founded the church. Paul had to combat the false teachings that had infiltrated the Colossian church. The believers were combining ideas from other religions 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 among the believers in Colossae 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 Jn. 4:2 – 3). Paul is urging the believers to make Christ the focal point of their lives, conduct, and principles in like manner when they first received Christ.

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

## LIFE APPLICATION

How do you define 'HOPE'?

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In June in the Northern Hemisphere, the summer season typically means that schools are letting out for summer break. Usually by now, everyone has plans for their free time. What are your hopes and plans for the summer? Draw pictures to symbolize your plans (e.g.: beach ball to symbolize a visit to the ocean).





What hopes do you have for your church, community, and the world despite the difficulties we face each day? How can change be made possible?

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## SUMMARY

Hope is easy when life is going well. However, when we face difficulties, hope can diminish.

Paul suffered while imprisoned for his faith in Christ but still rejoiced. His hope was secure in Christ. Paul understood his destination was heaven. All he had suffered would not compare to his eternal inheritance, which included a transformed, glorified body. Paul also remembered that he would live in the presence of Christ forever. We, as Christians, can have hope no matter the circumstances we are made to endure. God can use our suffering for His glory and our spiritual growth.

This week, pray and pay attention to those around you. God desires for you to encourage those going through difficult times. Encouragement can be with or without words. Just being present and listening can make a difference.

*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, our trust and hope is in you. Therefore, we will strive to live in peace with others. Amen.*

Song: AMECH # 364 "My Hope Is Built"

APPENDIX A



<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

## VOCABULARY

**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**

Leaders often have to deal with rebellion, name-calling, physical attacks, bad reports, lies, family attacks, and much more. Being a leader is not easy when you have to deal with so much. Yet, everyone looks to the

leader for answers. Just ask the pastor, the sports captains, the Y.P.D. president, community leaders, job bosses, etc. They are going to tell you the truth about being in a position of authority.

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

*Why do some reject an offer of leadership? Do you hold a leadership position at school, church, or the community? What do you have to deal with regularly?*

## **BIBLE STORY**

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. In 1 Corinthians (the second letter), he used strong language to correct and teach 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 2 Corinthians, Paul defended his authority by stating his ministry was accredited by God (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 is energized by 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.

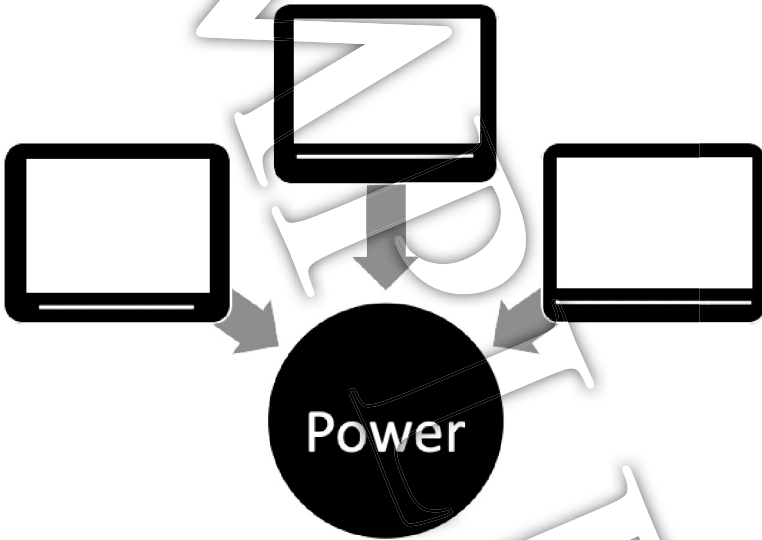
The old legal covenant is referred to as "the ministry that brought death." It condemns us and points out our sins. In contrast, the new covenant of grace is called "the ministry of the Spirit" and "the ministry that brings righteousness." It gives life and provides for the removal of our sins. The old 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?*

### LIFE APPLICATION

Various situations in our society and world call for bold leaders to stand up and speak the truth to those in power. What present-day and historical leaders do you admire? Using the chart, write the names of three bold leaders who speak truth to power. Discuss how they “speak truth to power.”



Using your cell phone, look for three pictures/images on social media that reflect life without Christ and take a screenshot. Also, look for three 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. Divide up into two groups and share your collages. *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 poster board.)

## SUMMARY

Paul defended his call from God and authority to minister. False teachers stirred up others to act ungodly based on the negative information shared. They lacked a 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. Every day be bold in your witness on behalf of Christ.

*Where do we get the boldness needed when facing personal challenges? How can our faith fortify us to overcome our fears? What evidence do we have that the Holy Spirit is always present with us?*

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

*Prayer: God, thank you for boldness through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. I am confident I can stand against evilness and win souls for Christ. 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

## VOCABULARY

**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**

Kind acts are being done by people all the time even if we do not know it. It is nice to be kind to others. Kindness can be holding the door open for the person behind you. A person can share their meal with someone hungry in school or at a fast-food restaurant. Kindness can be as simple

as giving someone a pencil to use. You do not have to be wealthy to demonstrate kindness.

There can be a social sacrifice to be kind to those who are different. Some may feel you have lowered your standards to be associated with those who are disabled, hungry, poor, or of another race or culture. We as individuals have to decide whether to associate with those Jesus loves or remain isolated in cliques.

*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**

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. 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 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 imitate 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?*

## LIFE APPLICATION

What type of unkind acts have you experienced or noticed this past week at home, school, social media, church, on TV, or in your community? How did it affect you? What type of reaction did you have or see? How does God desire for us to react to unkind people?

The more we practice kindness the easier it becomes for us. The class will be divided into pairs. On an index card or sticky note, write kind words about your partner. Once finished, each person will read their kind words. The notes will then be placed on the board for everyone to see every time they enter the classroom.

How can we unite people in the world? Identify specific steps we can implement to stop divisions and hate.

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## 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.

*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?*

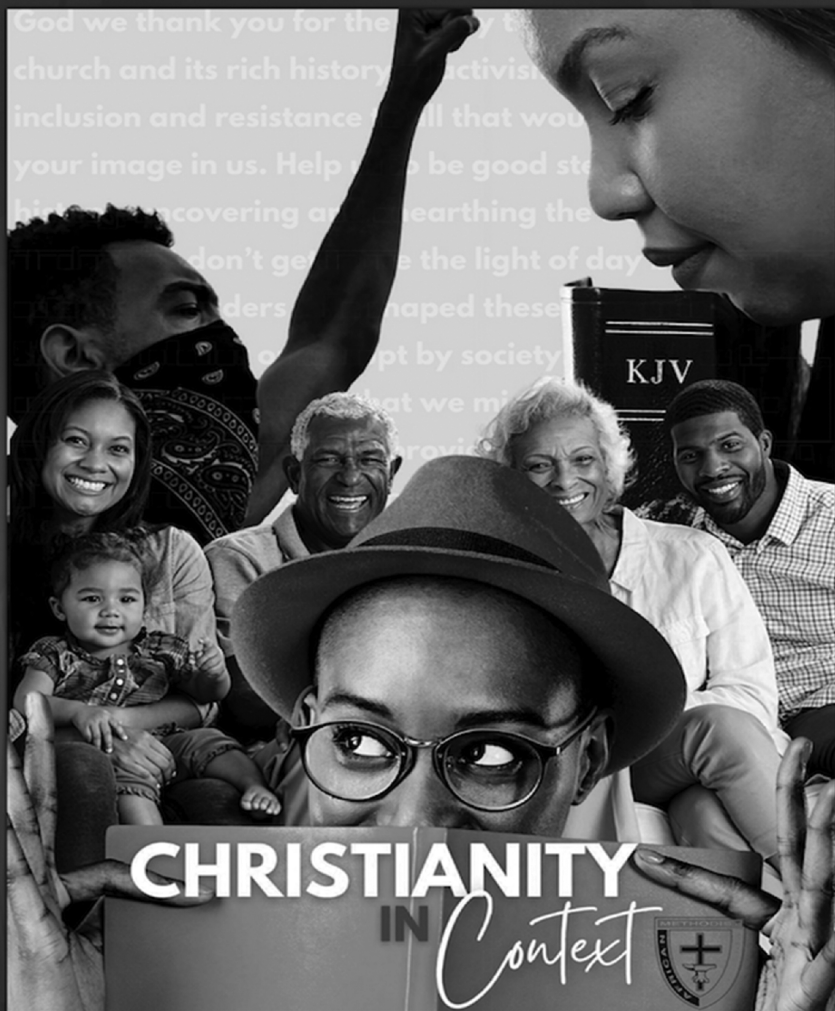
## **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

*Prayer: God, help me to be kind, loving, and inclusive toward all people. Amen.*

*Song: "I Need You to Survive" by Hezekiah Walker  
and the Love Fellowship Choir*

*<https://youtu.be/JBwUkCYW2n0?si=OnGJsPn2SUEx4fww>*

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