

## **Day One**

Grace to you and peace from God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here in Luke 3:1-14, when John tells the people to produce fruit in keeping with repentance, he is telling them to live as one whose future is secure. That's why he tells them to share out of their excess with those who have none or don't collect more taxes than you are required to or don't extort money or accuse people falsely. Live like one who has been given their life back – like one who has escaped the wrath to come.

They came to John to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. That baptism contains a promise. Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. By Jesus' life, death and resurrection wall of sin that had separated us from God has been broken. By the forgiveness received through the waters of baptism, we are made new. We are raised to life – a life that has no end.

Our future is secure. Our hope in Christ and the resurrection that He shares with us is certain and sure. That's why we are able to care for the needs of our neighbor. We have been made a part of God's family. We are His children and He will leave us nor forsake us.

## **Day Two**

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Here in John 8:31-36, Jesus is talking about freedom – freedom from the chains of sin. To those who think that they are already free, Jesus says that anyone who sins is a slave to sin. Slaves are bound to their master – are the property of their master. They are not members of the family. They have no permanent place in the family.

But a son has as permanent place in the family. They belong to it forever. Being part of God's family is a good thing. We become a part of that family because of the work of the Son. The Son – Jesus Christ – has set us free by His perfect life, His sacrificial death and His victorious resurrection. He has paid the price in His body that was needed to buy us back from the master of sin.

Having been bought back, we have become adopted children of God. We have become fellow heirs with the Son – with Jesus. We now have a permanent place in the family of God. We know the truth – who is Jesus Christ. We have been joined together with Him and in that union we have been set free indeed.

## **Day Three**

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Here in Romans 8:31-36, Jesus says that the truth will set you free. He tells us that if we hold to His teachings, then we will know the truth and the truth will set us free. One could conclude from this that it is by the study of God's Word that we come to know the truth.

But it is more than a simple intellectual pursuit. It is not the gaining of knowledge that sets us free. It is knowing in a relational sense – knowing a person. In John 14, Jesus says that He is the Truth. Knowing the Truth who sets you free is knowing Jesus Christ as the Son of God. And as Jesus says, "If the Son sets you free, then you will be free indeed."

Jesus has set us free by bringing us into a relationship with Himself. He has joined us to Himself in Baptism. In union with Him, we receive the benefits of His saving work accomplished through His life, death and resurrection. By union with Jesus in His death and life, we are set free from the power of sin and the punishment that sin deserves.

## **Day Four**

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Here in Romans 4:18-25, Paul writes about the assurance of faith – an assurance that comes by the power of God at work through His Word. Abraham that God had power to do what He promised – to make Abraham the father of many nations.

He believed that, in spite of the many realities to the contrary. He was as good as dead and Sarah's womb was

dead as well. Even when he didn't fully understand the promise, he never wavered through unbelief. He would have never consented to Sarah's plan that he take Hagar that he might have a child by her, if he didn't believe that God had power to do what He promised.

We have been given that same assurance of faith. He has promised that through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, our sin has been forgiven. He has raised us from death to life – a new and eternal life. He has made us His children. We are dearly loved.

We believe that God has power to do what He has promised in spite of the many realities of this world that would seem to contradict that. We age. We continue to sin. We feel guilt and shame. We don't always feel loved by God. Doubts arise.

And yet God still speaks to us through His Word. He continues to tell us that we are His – that we are forgiven and that we will live even if we die. The empty tomb is the historical marker – evidence of God's power. Faith believes that the tomb is empty because Jesus rose from the dead just as He said He would. And faith believes that because He lives, so shall we.

## **Day Five**

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Here in John 9, beginning at verse 13, we see how what we know can blind us to what is true. Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man so that he could see. This happened on a Sabbath. According to the laws of the day, Jesus violated the Sabbath in at least two ways. He made mud and put it on the eyes of the blind man. And He gave sight to the blind man. Healing was a work and so was prohibited on the Sabbath.

Those were the laws of the elders – the traditions of men. The Pharisees knew the law. They knew the Sabbath laws intimately. And what they knew prevented them from seeing and believing that Jesus was the Christ – the Anointed One of God – who had come to save the world.

On another occasion, Jesus told those, who went to great lengths to make sure everyone was observing the Sabbath in the ways that the traditions of the elders set forth, that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. If the Sabbath is to be a day of rest, then to be healed – to receive rest from the effects of an illness – is what the Sabbath was made for.

Jesus has come to be our Sabbath rest – to give us rest from our guilt and shame that we suffer because we sin. He has come to give us rest from trying to work our way into God's favor. By His life, death and resurrection He has become our rest. By the forgiveness we receive, we have peace with God. And we rest in that peace.