

First Century Church of God

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2025

VOL 3

Dear Brethren,

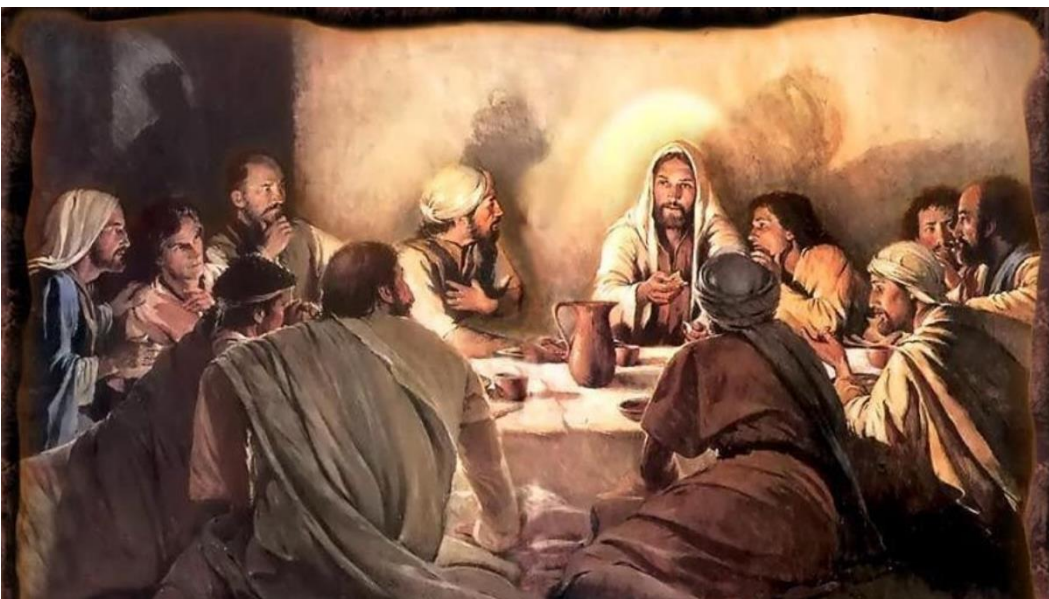
Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! As we approach the sacred season of Passover and Unleavened Bread, we are reminded by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 to: "purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The Passover is not merely a ritual, but a profound call to spiritual renewal. Just as Israel was commanded to remove all leaven from their homes (Exodus 12:15), we too must examine our hearts, casting out sin, pride, and anything that hinders our walk with Christ. The old leaven represents impurity and corruption, but Christ, our sinless Savior, has set for us the ultimate example of holiness and obedience to emulate as we approach this holy season.

2 Corinthians 13:5 urges us: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves." Preparation for the season calls for deep reflection, repentance, and recommitment to God's way. Jesus, in His final hours, humbled Himself to wash His disciples' feet (John 13:14-15), teaching us the importance of humility and servanthood.

As we prepare to partake in the body and blood of Christ (Luke 22:19-20), let us do so with hearts purified, striving to walk in righteousness. May we renew our commitment to live as new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17), reflecting Christ's love and holiness. May this Passover inspire a renewed zeal to cleanse ourselves, walking in sincerity and truth, as we follow our Lord's example.

In Christ's service,
Pastor George Ramocan, Overseer



"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:28)



Effective Messaging in Personal Social-Media Evangelical Outreach

Dear Brethren,

In using WhatsApp, or any other social media platform, to send messages for evangelical outreach, I have felt the need to be mindful about when and what to send to an individual versus a group created for evangelical outreach. If you have had a similar concern, here are some factors to consider:

- 1. Personalization vs. Community Engagement:** Individual messages are best for creating personal connections, addressing specific concerns, or tailoring content to someone's needs. Group messages are ideal for fostering community, sharing general updates, and inviting people to participate in collective events or discussions.
- 2. Relationship with the Recipient:** If you have an established relationship or wish to build a personal one-on-one connection, an individual message is more appropriate. A group message works better for casual contacts or when introducing someone to the broader community.
- 3. Sensitivity of the Message:** For personal or sensitive matters like prayer requests or spiritual guidance, individual messages are more respectful. Group messages are better for general updates or collective invitations.
- 4. Recipient's Preferences:** Some people prefer private, direct communication, while others enjoy being part of a group for interaction and support. It's good practice to understand and respect each person's preference.
- 5. Urgency:** If the message is urgent or requires personal attention (e.g., a prayer request), individual messages are more effective. Group messages are suitable for less time-sensitive information like upcoming events.
- 6. Volume of Outreach:** For a small, tailored outreach, individual messages are ideal. For reaching a larger audience with the same message, group messages save time and allow for broader engagement.

Feedback from your recipient is invaluable to gauge the effectiveness of messaging. Sometimes it is helpful to supplement texting with an occasional phone call to get meaningful feedback. Also, awareness of the profile of the recipient eg. Gen X, Z or Alpha also can be helpful to inform how to tailor the message.

In our evangelical outreach via social media, it is helpful to remember that connecting with the individual in the Spirit to serve is more effective than appearing to be throwing messages at the person.

In general, individual messages are good for personalized, sensitive outreach and group messages for promoting community activities or events. You can also combine both methods, using personal messages for outreach and groups for ongoing engagement.



The Israelites were instructed to smear the blood of a sacrificed lamb on the lintel and doorposts of their homes as a sign, so that the "destroyer" (death) would "pass over" and not harm their firstborn.

My Journey as a Teacher in the Classroom

By Daphne Costley

Teaching is more than just a profession—it is a calling. Every day, I walk into the classroom with the responsibility of shaping young minds, nurturing hearts, and planting seeds of wisdom. The journey is filled with challenges, triumphs, and moments of divine guidance. As Proverbs 22:6 reminds us, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It takes a village to raise children as parents especially first-time parents lack the necessary skills to rear children. The older and more experienced adults are often times called upon for advice and support.

One of the greatest trials in a teacher's day is managing classroom behavior. A student may refuse to listen, another may struggle with emotions, and yet another may need extra support. In these moments, the words of James 1:19-20 serve as a guiding principle: "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

Many a time during instruction a child disrupts the lesson, instead of reacting with frustration, I would take a deep breath, kneel beside the child, and speak with gentleness. "How can I help you?" demonstrating the love and patience that Jesus showed to his disciples. By modeling kindness, I expect them to do the same. Our new curriculum is packed with self-regulation skills for children to resort to when feeling overwhelmed. At this time, I would also remind them of what to do when their emotions are out of whack.

There are moments when students struggle to grasp new concepts, whether it be reading, math, or even social skills. One scripture that jumps out is Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Because we cannot use scripture per se in the classroom, I just encourage them to persevere, reassuring them that learning takes time and effort.

When a child is on the verge of giving up, I think of the story of David and Goliath. "David was small, but with God's help, he overcame a giant. Children can conquer their giants too!" Not necessarily using the actual story of David and Goliath, but students favor superheroes. At this point building a child's faith is very important for them to accomplish their reality. With the renewed confidence, he/she will try again, embodying the faith that learning and growth are always possible.

A teacher's role extends beyond academics—it involves shaping character. It is important for me to foster my environment with love and kindness, echoing Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

When two students argue, my responsibility is helping children resolve their conflict peacefully. As their mediator I use different quotes to calm the situation. "Let's practice forgiveness," "We are a family and we must love one another". Can we say something kind to one another?" A song we recently learn to quell anger is "Just stop, take a deep breath and relax." Slowly, the children learn that reconciliation is more powerful than anger.

Some days are overwhelming. The weight of responsibilities, student struggles, and personal challenges can feel heavy. But before the day begins, I pray, entrusting all my tasks to God. As Isaiah 40:31 declares, "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

With renewed strength, I can walk into the classroom, ready to pour love, wisdom, and faith into the hearts of my God given students.

Being a teacher is a sacred calling—one that requires patience, perseverance, and faith. Through every challenge, I can hold onto God's word, knowing that my work has a lasting impact. As Galatians 6:9 encourages, "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Every lesson taught, every act of kindness, and every moment of encouragement is a seed planted in the hearts of children. And with God's grace, those seeds will grow into something beautiful. For me, there is no greater reward than knowing I made a difference—not just in academics, but in the lives and souls of her students.



With renewed strength, I can walk into the classroom, ready to pour love, wisdom, and faith into the hearts of my God given students.

Dear Brethren,

As we partake of the Passover and keep the days of unleavened bread let us reflect on the fullness of the sacrifice of our savior and the many blessings we are afforded in the new covenant.

In 1 Corinthians 1:30 we find a list of some of those benefits bestowed upon us for being in the body of Christ and sons and daughters of the Almighty.

1 Corinthians 1:30, *King James Version*

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Wisdom

We are grateful for the access to the wisdom of God in Christ. Not just knowledge but the ability to use spiritual knowledge skillfully at the right time and place. We need this wisdom to navigate through life's challenges and the trials we face on a day-to-day basis. When asked for advice and guidance from others we are able to give good counsel to those seeking help with a particular situation. In James 3:7, we find a list of characteristics of the wisdom from above. This wisdom has many beautiful facets to it and gives us guidance as to How "godly" wisdom should be given.

James 3:7

7 - But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. We receive the power from the Holy Spirit through the death and sacrifice of Christ to fulfill the characteristics listed in James 3.

Righteousness

The righteousness of the father stems from the faith we have in his Son. In Ephesians 2:8, "faith is a gift from God," meaning that the ability to believe in God is not something we earn or achieve on our own, but rather a gift given by God through grace. And out our faith comes works of faith as it says in the book of James. Abraham was an example of having righteousness imputed to him because of his faith in the eternal. [Romans 4] But he also had works associated with that faith as it says in Genesis.

Genesis 26:5, *King James Version*

5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

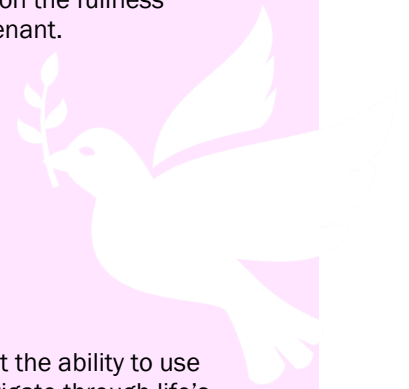
Sanctification; literally means "to set apart for special use or purpose", that is, to make holy or sacred. Therefore, sanctification refers to the state or process of being set apart, i.e. "made holy", as a vessel, full of the Holy Spirit. Paul also talks about Christ as the first fruit being holy then we as the rest of the dough and branches are made holy too. We are made into a Royal priesthood offering the sacrifice of praise from our lips.

Hebrews 10:14, *English Standard Version*

14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

1 Corinthians 6:11, *English Standard Version*

11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.



Redemption

Ephesians 1:7, *New International Version*

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

And he has translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the glorious light of his kingdom. We have been redeemed or purchased by the blood of our savior from the penalty of sin. The death sentence has been removed from us to live and have our being in the Father and the Son. We also have been saved from being the "sons of disobedience" belonging to the Satanic kingdom with all its corruption and have been transformed through the power of the sacrifice of Christ into the "children of the Most High" with all its goodness.

With all of these benefits derived from the sacrifice of Christ we become equipped to fight the good fight and remain faithful through the power of the Father and the Son through the many trials we find ourselves in and the resistance we may face with regard to preaching the gospel.

Let us avail ourselves to the power of prayer and meditation during this time so we can partake of the Passover in a "worthy manner", discerning the body of our lord.

Elder Mark Rusinko



"Israel left Egypt by night with a high hand" refers to the Israelites' departure from Egypt during the Exodus, as described in the Bible, where they left Egypt in a hurry, after the death of the firstborn in Egypt, and with a sense of boldness and determination.

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