**QUARTER 2- APRIL 20 -26, 2024**

 **LESSON 4- STANDING FOR THE TRUTH**

 **MEMORY TEXT:**

**“ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life’ ” (John 3:14-15).**

**SABBATH AND SUNDAY**

**SUNDAY TITLE: PERSECUTED YET TRIUMPHANT**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. **Persecution and Triumph**: Throughout history, persecution against God's people has often followed periods of faithfulness (Daniel 7:23-25; Revelation 12:6; Revelation 12:14). Polycarp, an early church leader, exemplified this by being martyred in Smyrna’s public square for refusing to betray his Lord by burning incense to the Roman gods.
2. **Prophetic Time Periods**: This lesson also examines prophetic time periods mentioned in Daniel 7:23-25 and Revelation 12:6, 14, highlighting the symbolic meaning of these time periods, such as the 1,260 days representing years of papal dominance and persecution.
3. **Day-Year Principle**: The lesson also introduces the day-year principle, where one prophetic day equals one literal year, and explains its application in understanding the time periods mentioned in prophecy (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6).
4. **Refuge in God**: The lesson emphasizes how God always prepares a place for His faithful followers, providing refuge and sustenance even in the midst of persecution and trials (Psalms 46:1-11). Polycarp's unwavering faith in the face of persecution exemplifies this trust in God's provision.
5. **Historical Context**: The lesson also delves into historical events such as the removal of the pope from Rome in 1798 by Napoleon's general Berthier, marking the end of the papal dominance period prophesied in Revelation.
6. **Triumph Through Christ**: Despite persecution and martyrdom, believers triumphed through their faith in Christ. Their victory over sin and death was secured by Christ's victory on the cross (Revelation 2:10; Acts 5:28-32). Polycarp's steadfastness in Christ's name serves as a powerful example of this triumph.
7. **Strengthened Faith**: The lesson encourages reflection on how fulfilled Bible prophecy strengthens faith by affirming God's sovereignty and faithfulness to His promises (Psalms 19:7-11; 1 John 5:11-13). Polycarp's martyrdom, along with other historical events, serves to strengthen believers' faith in God's providence and His ultimate triumph over evil.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. **Why do you think persecution often follows periods of faithfulness to God?**

**Answer:** Persecution often arises as a result of the clash between the values and principles of God's kingdom and those of the world. When believers stand firm for truth and righteousness, they challenge the status quo and threaten the power structures of the world, leading to opposition and persecution.

1. **How does the day-year principle help us understand prophetic time periods?** **Answer:** The day-year principle, supported by biblical evidence, allows us to interpret prophetic time periods symbolically, understanding that each day represents a year in fulfillment. This principle helps unravel the symbolic language of prophecy and provides insight into the timing and fulfillment of prophetic events.
2. **In what ways can believers today find refuge in God during times of trial and persecution?**

**Answer:** Believers today can find refuge in God through prayer, studying His Word, fellowship with other believers, and trusting in His promises of protection and provision. By leaning on God's strength and grace, believers can endure trials with faith and courage.

1. **How does the historical fulfillment of Bible prophecy reinforce our confidence in God's sovereignty and faithfulness?**

**Answer:** The historical fulfillment of Bible prophecy demonstrates God's control over human history and His faithfulness to His promises. Seeing how accurately and precisely prophecies have been fulfilled in the past strengthens our confidence in God's sovereignty and assures us that His plans will ultimately prevail.

**MONDAY**

**TITLE: LIGHT VANQUISHES THE DARKNESS**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. **Urgency to Contend for the Faith**: Christians are urged to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 1:3-4). The warning is against allowing false teachings and practices to infiltrate the church, turning the grace of God into lewdness.
2. **Faithfulness Amidst Persecution**: God promises a crown of life to those who remain faithful to Him even in the face of death (Revelation 2:10). This promise is exemplified in the experience of the church at Smyrna, where believers faced persecution for their refusal to worship pagan gods.
3. **Endurance Through Trials**: The promise of the crown of life inspires believers to endure trials, difficulties, suffering, and even death for the sake of Christ (Revelation 2:10). This promise motivated faithful Christians throughout history, including the Waldenses, who remained steadfast in their faith despite persecution.
4. **Hope in God's Promises**: Despite challenging times, believers can find encouragement in God's promises. By focusing on the promises of eternal life and the rewards of faithfulness, believers can overcome fear and find strength to persevere (Revelation 2:10).

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **What does it mean to "contend earnestly for the faith"? How can modern Christians apply this admonition in today's context?** Answer: Contending earnestly for the faith involves actively defending and upholding the truths of Scripture against false teachings and practices. In today's context, this could mean being vigilant against secular ideologies, false doctrines, and cultural pressures that contradict biblical principles. It requires studying and understanding the Word of God, boldly proclaiming the truth, and living out the Gospel in word and deed.
2. **How does the promise of the crown of life provide hope and motivation for believers facing persecution or trials?** Answer: The promise of the crown of life assures believers that their faithfulness in the midst of persecution and trials is not in vain. It reminds them of the eternal rewards awaiting those who remain faithful to Christ, even unto death. This promise strengthens their resolve, sustains their endurance, and instills hope in the midst of suffering, knowing that their ultimate reward is secured in Christ.
3. **In what ways can we cultivate a mindset focused on God's promises rather than succumbing to fear during challenging times?** Answer: Cultivating a mindset focused on God's promises involves immersing ourselves in Scripture, meditating on God's faithfulness, and cultivating a vibrant prayer life. By regularly reminding ourselves of God's promises and claiming them in prayer, we can anchor our faith in His unfailing love and sovereignty. Additionally, staying connected to a supportive Christian community and seeking wise counsel can provide encouragement and strength during difficult seasons.

**TUESDAY**

**TITLE: COURAGE TO STAND**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. **Allegiance to God's Authority**: The basic principle found in Acts 5:28-32; Ephesians 6:10-12; Revelation 3:11 is the unwavering allegiance to God's authority over human authority. The apostles' declaration in Acts 5:29, "We ought to obey God rather than men," underscores the principle of prioritizing obedience to God above all else.
2. **Strength in the Lord**: Believers are encouraged to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10). This emphasizes the reliance on God's strength and empowerment rather than human abilities when facing spiritual battles and persecution.
3. **Preservation of God's Word**: The Waldenses demonstrated courage by standing for the truths of God's Word amidst persecution and opposition from the Roman church. They were committed to preserving and sharing the Scriptures, even at great personal risk, as illustrated by their meticulous copying and dissemination of the Bible.
4. **Path of the Just**: The path of the just is likened to the shining sun that grows brighter over time (Proverbs 4:18). This metaphor emphasizes the progressive revelation of truth and the ongoing journey of spiritual growth and enlightenment for believers.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **How can modern Christians emulate the courage and commitment of the Waldenses in standing for the truths of God's Word in today's cultural context?** Answer: Modern Christians can emulate the courage and commitment of the Waldenses by prioritizing the authority of Scripture over cultural norms and societal pressures. This involves diligently studying and understanding the Word of God, boldly proclaiming biblical truths, and remaining steadfast in faith even in the face of opposition or persecution. Additionally, actively engaging in efforts to preserve and disseminate God's Word in our communities can further uphold the legacy of the Waldenses.
2. **In what ways can believers draw strength from the Lord amidst spiritual battles and challenges?** Answer: Believers can draw strength from the Lord by cultivating a deep and intimate relationship with Him through prayer, worship, and studying His Word. By relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, believers can access God's strength and guidance to navigate through spiritual battles and challenges. Additionally, staying connected to a supportive Christian community and seeking wise counsel can provide encouragement and accountability during difficult times.
3. **How can we effectively shine the light of Christ in our communities? What practical steps can we take to reflect Christ's love and truth to those around us?** Answer: Effectively shining the light of Christ in our communities requires living out the Gospel message in both word and deed. This involves demonstrating Christ's love through acts of kindness, compassion, and service to others. Additionally, sharing the message of salvation and biblical truths with gentleness and respect, while also living lives of integrity and authenticity, can effectively reflect Christ's light to those around us. Regularly praying for opportunities to share the Gospel and being sensitive to the needs of others are practical steps we can take to engage in evangelism and outreach within our communities.

**WEDNESDAY**

**TITLE: THE MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. **Rejoicing in God's Word**: The Reformers, like David and Jeremiah, found joy and delight in studying and obeying the Word of God (Psalms 19:7-11; Psalms 119:140; Psalms 119:162; Jeremiah 15:16). Their love for God's law and their passion for Scripture study were foundational to the Reformation movement.
2. **Transformative Power of Scripture**: The Reformers were transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit through their study of the Scriptures. The Bible was not merely a book of rules but a source of spiritual nourishment and enlightenment that enriched their lives and empowered their ministries.
3. **Missionary Zeal**: Inspired by their love for Christ and the truth of His Word, the Reformers were driven to share the Gospel with others (2 Timothy 2:1-3). John Wycliffe's dedication to translating the Bible into English exemplifies this missionary zeal, as he sought to make God's Word accessible to all people.
4. **Endurance and Perseverance**: Despite facing opposition and persecution from the papacy, the Reformers remained steadfast in their commitment to spreading God's Word. Their endurance in the face of adversity, symbolized by Wycliffe as the "Morning Star of the Reformation," highlights their unwavering faith and courage.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **How can modern Christians cultivate a similar love and delight for God's Word as seen in the Reformers?**

 **Answer:** Modern Christians can cultivate a love for God's Word by prioritizing regular Scripture study and prayer in their daily lives. By immersing themselves in the Scriptures, seeking to understand its teachings, and applying its principles to their lives, believers can experience the transformative power of God's Word and develop a deep affection for it.

1. **What lessons can we learn from the Reformers' missionary zeal and commitment to sharing the Gospel?**

**Answer:** From the Reformers' example, we learn the importance of passionately sharing the Gospel with others, regardless of obstacles or opposition. Their dedication to making God's Word accessible to all people challenges us to actively engage in evangelism and outreach in our communities, using whatever means available to spread the message of salvation.

1. **How can we maintain endurance and perseverance in our faith despite facing opposition or challenges?**

**Answer:** To maintain endurance and perseverance in our faith, we must cultivate a deep dependence on God through prayer and reliance on His strength. Additionally, drawing inspiration from the lives of faithful believers who have gone before us, such as the Reformers, can bolster our resolve to stand firm in the face of adversity. Finally, remaining rooted in the truths of Scripture and actively participating in a supportive Christian community can provide encouragement and accountability during difficult times.

**THURSDAY**

**TITLE: CHEERED BY HOPE**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. **Victory Over Death**: Believers in the Middle Ages experienced the reality of the great controversy, facing persecution and trials, but they found hope in Christ's victory over death (Hebrews 2:14-15). Despite facing persecution, believers found assurance in Christ's promise of eternal life and victory over death.
2. **Faith in God's Promises**: The faithful Waldenses and martyrs of the Middle Ages found courage and strength in their faith in God's promises (John 14:19). They were cheered by the hope of eternal life and found joy in fellowship with Christ, even in the midst of suffering.
3. **Assurances of Eternal Life**: The promises of eternal life and resurrection given by Jesus in John 5:24, John 11:25-26, and John 5:11-13 provide personal assurances for believers. These promises offer hope and comfort in the trials of life, assuring believers of God's faithfulness and the victory they have in Christ.
4. **Sustained by God's Grace**: Believers like John Huss found strength and peace in the midst of trials through the grace of God (Hebrews 10:23). Despite facing imprisonment and impending death, Huss experienced God's sustaining grace, which filled him with peace and confidence in the future life.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **What does it mean to lose everything for Christ? What, in the end, do you really lose?**

**Answer**: Losing everything for Christ means sacrificing worldly possessions, reputation, and even life itself for the sake of following Him. However, in the end, believers do not lose anything of eternal value. Instead, they gain the assurance of salvation, the hope of eternal life, and the promise of being with Christ forever. As Jesus stated in Mark 8:36, gaining the whole world but losing one's soul is the ultimate loss. Believers learn from the example of the martyrs that the temporary sacrifices made for Christ are incomparable to the eternal rewards awaiting them.

1. **What lessons can we learn from the Waldenses and the Reformers that can sustain us in earth’s final conflict?**

**Answer:** From the Waldenses and the Reformers, we learn the importance of unwavering faith in God's promises, even in the face of persecution and adversity. Their steadfastness in the truth of God's Word, their commitment to sharing the Gospel, and their reliance on God's grace and strength serve as enduring examples for believers facing the challenges of earth's final conflict. These examples teach us to hold fast to our faith, to stand firm in the truth, and to trust in God's faithfulness, knowing that He will sustain us through every trial.

1. **How do the promises of eternal life and victory over death in Jesus Christ provide hope and comfort in the trials of life?**

**Answer:** The promises of eternal life and victory over death in Jesus Christ offer believers hope and comfort in the midst of life's trials. Knowing that their ultimate destiny is secure in Christ gives believers assurance and peace, enabling them to face challenges with courage and perseverance. The hope of resurrection and the assurance of eternal life remind believers that this present life is temporary and that their true home is with Christ. As they cling to these promises, believers find strength and solace, knowing that God is faithful and His promises are sure.

**FRIDAY**

**TITLE: FURTHER THOUGHT**

**IMPORTANT POINTS**

1. **Progressive Revelation**: God reveals truth gradually to His people, leading them out of darkness into light (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 103). Here’s the statement from the Great Controversy;

“God permitted great light to shine upon the minds of these chosen men, revealing to them many of the errors of Rome; but they did not receive all the light that was to be given to the world. Through these, His servants, God was leading the people out of the darkness of Romanism; but there were many and great obstacles for them to meet, and He led them on, step by step, as they could bear it. They were not prepared to receive all the light at once. Like the full glory of the noontide sun to those who have long dwelt in darkness, it would, if presented, have caused them to turn away. Therefore, He revealed it to the leaders little by little, as it could be received by the people. From century to century, other faithful workers were to follow, to lead the people on still further in the path of reform.”—Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 103.

As seen throughout history, God leads His people step by step, revealing truth as they are able to bear it. This progressive light helps individuals and communities grow in understanding and faith.

1. **Humility and Repentance**: John Huss exemplified humility and repentance in acknowledging his own errors and admonishing others to prioritize spiritual matters over worldly pursuits (The Great Controversy, pp. 105, 106). His letter reflects a deep commitment to God and a desire for spiritual growth and transformation. Here’s the statement from the Great Controversy;

“In another letter, to a priest who had become a disciple of the gospel, Huss spoke with deep humility of his own errors, accusing himself ‘of having felt pleasure in wearing rich apparel and of having wasted hours in frivolous occupations.’ He then added these touching admonitions: ‘May the glory of God and the salvation of souls occupy thy mind, and not the possession of benefices and estates. Beware of adorning thy house more than thy soul; and, above all, give thy care to the spiritual edifice. Be pious and humble with the poor, and consume not thy substance in feasting. Shouldst thou not amend thy life and refrain from superfluities, I fear that thou wilt be severely chastened, as I am myself.’ ”—The Great Controversy, pp. 105, 106.

1. **Consistency in Truth**: New discoveries of truth must be consistent with previous truths revealed by God (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 103). While God continues to lead His people into deeper understanding, new light should never contradict old light. Truth is consistent and harmonious throughout Scripture.
2. **Living Counter-Culturally**: Believers face the challenge of living counter-culturally, resisting societal values and moral codes that conflict with biblical teachings. This requires discernment, courage, and a commitment to remain faithful to God's Word despite cultural pressures.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. **What is “progressive light”? Why does God reveal truth gradually? How do these principles apply to God’s church today?** Answer: Progressive light refers to the gradual revelation of truth by God to His people over time. God reveals truth gradually to lead His people into deeper understanding and to accommodate their ability to comprehend and accept it. This principle applies to God's church today as believers continue to grow in knowledge and understanding of Scripture. By embracing progressive light, the church can remain dynamic and responsive to God's leading, while also maintaining continuity with foundational truths.
2. **How do new discoveries of truth relate to previous truths that God’s people have understood? Why must new light never contradict old light?** Answer: New discoveries of truth build upon and expand upon previous truths revealed by God. While new light may provide additional insights or perspectives, it should always align with and complement existing truths. New light must never contradict old light because God's truth is consistent and harmonious throughout Scripture. Contradictions would undermine the credibility and reliability of God's Word and create confusion among believers.
3. **No matter where you live, your culture is going to promote values, ideas, and moral codes that in some way conflict with what the Bible teaches. After identifying these areas of conflict, how do you see yourself and us, as a church, dealing with these challenges? How do we remain good citizens while at the same time not succumbing to whatever warped values our culture proclaims?** Answer: In the face of cultural conflicts with biblical teachings, believers and the church must prioritize fidelity to God's Word above cultural norms. This involves discerning and challenging cultural values that contradict Scripture, while also engaging in respectful dialogue and advocacy for biblical principles. Remaining good citizens involves participating responsibly in society while upholding biblical values, advocating for justice, and being a light in the midst of darkness.
4. **How does John Huss’s letter impact your thinking today? What impresses you about this letter?** Answer: John Huss's letter serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of humility, repentance, and prioritizing spiritual matters over worldly pursuits. His humility in acknowledging his own faults and his earnest admonitions to prioritize God's kingdom inspire reflection and self-examination. The letter challenges believers to reevaluate their own priorities and commitments in light of eternal truths, urging them to live lives of genuine faith and devotion to God.