

CHAMP SPORTS DEVOTIONAL



SPRING 2021

CHAMP Office – 704.341.5387
Weather Hotline – 704.341.5473
www.champsportsinfo.com

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Season Schedule

Season Begins: Week of March 15
Uniform Distribution: Week of March 15
Game Schedules: Week of March 8
Spring Break: April 2 - 8 (No meetings)
Season Ends: Saturday, May 22

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Updated Mon-Fri. at 3:00 PM; Sat. at 7:30 AM

Join us weekly for Sunday morning
worship via livestream or in person. Check
www.calvarychurch.com for details and times.

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Week of March 15-20, 2021

Welcome to CHAMP Sports! We are so glad that you are here! This season we are going to be talking about the Living God and how we can know Him.

The God of the Bible calls Himself “the Living God.” Why? Because He is Life! Life isn’t something that God has. Life is something that God is. How does the Living God describe Himself? He says that He is “the Fountain of Living Waters” (Jeremiah 17:13). What does this mean? It means that just like a stream of water that bubbles up out of the earth gives natural life to the plants, the animals, and us, so God Himself gives spiritual life to all things. Without God, there is no spiritual life. In God, there is abundant life.

The thing that each one of us needs the most is the Living God. Without the Living God in us, our lives will dry up. Without the Living God in our minds, our minds will become dark and confused. Without the Living God in our hearts, our emotions will become chaotic and hopeless. Without the Living God in our consciences, our sense of what is right and wrong will become muddled and blurry. With the Living God there is life, joy, peace, love, and hope. Without the Living God, there is darkness, confusion, misery, despair, and death.

Jesus Christ, God’s Son, came into this world to set us free from sin and death so that we could become “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). Children of light are filled with “the Living God” who is “the Fountain of Living Waters.” One of the most wonderful things that Jesus ever said was, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:38).

So, let’s think about all of this. The Living God is a “Fountain of Living Waters,” and if we believe in Jesus, then the Living God will live inside of us and out of our hearts will flow rivers of living water. Then, wherever we go, Life Himself will come spilling out of our hearts giving life, joy, and peace to everyone and everything around us. What a beautiful world it would be if the Living God who is Light, Love, Truth, Beauty, and Goodness lived inside of everyone’s hearts!

Our goal at CHAMP Sports is to make much of God the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ so that all will believe in Him, and believing have life in His name (John 20:31). Do you believe in Jesus?

Ephesians 5:8

“For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

Questions: What is God like? How do we walk as “children of light”? Do you know God?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

John the Baptist

Week of March 22-27, 2021

God sent a man named John to prepare the way for His Son, Jesus. John was called *the Baptist* because he preached a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4).

How did John prepare the way for Jesus? How do we prepare the way for seeds when we are planting a garden? First, we remove the rocks, the thorns, and all other plants. Then we dig up and turn over the soil so that is soft. Once we have prepared the dirt, and the season is right, we plant the seed and it grows. John prepared the soil of people’s hearts by preaching repentance to them.

What is repentance? “Repentance” literally means “change your mind.” If we were driving a car to the west and then something happened in the east that needed our attention and we turned our car around and drove east, we would say we repented of going west and now we are on the road east.

John the Baptist’s whole life was about one thing—asking people to stop going their own way and return to God. As people listened to John talk about returning to God, many of them wanted to do it. When a person decided to put off their old life and start a new life with God, John baptized them with water.

As the person went down into the water, they said goodbye to their old way of life and when they came up out of the water, having been washed by the water, they said hello to a new way of life. The new way of life was God’s Way.

One day Jesus came to John the Baptist and Jesus asked to be baptized by John in the Jordan River. Why did Jesus ask to be baptized? Was there something wrong with Jesus? Did Jesus need to change His mind? No! Jesus is perfect in all of His thoughts and all of His ways. Jesus wasn’t being baptized for His sins, but for ours. Jesus didn’t die on the cross for His sins—He never sinned! Jesus died on the cross for our sins because each one of us has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). It is through Jesus’ death on the cross that we are forgiven of sin and so John said of Jesus, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)!

Malachi 3:7

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. **Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.**

Questions: How do we return to the LORD? Is God’s Word growing in your heart?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

The Apostle John

Week of March 29-April 10, 2021

Last week we talked about John the Baptist. This week we are going to talk about a different John—John who was one of Jesus’ twelve Apostles. What is an apostle? An apostle is someone who is sent out to do a job. In the case of Jesus’ twelve Apostles, Jesus picked them “so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons” (Mark 3:14-15).

After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Satan is God’s great adversary. God’s war is against Satan. Satan’s goal in tempting Jesus was to get Jesus to join *his* war against God. Satan is tricky. Satan did ask Jesus to join his war straight up; he tried to trick Jesus into joining his war like he tricked Adam and Eve into joining his war. However, Jesus wasn’t tricked by Satan. Jesus stayed true to God, saying, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word coming out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

After Jesus was tempted by Satan, Jesus began to choose twelve men to be His apostles. We also call these twelve men the twelve disciples of Christ. A disciple is one who learns. The twelve disciples were chosen by God to learn many things from Jesus so that they could then go out and teach others.

One of Jesus’ twelve apostles was named John. When Jesus first met John, He gave John and his brother the name: “sons of Thunder.” What did this name mean? It meant that James and John were loud and scary. For example, one time Jesus was rejected by some people and James and John said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” (Luke 9:54). Jesus was not at all pleased by this suggestion for He had come to save the lost, not destroy them!

Over the years that John spent walking with Jesus, Jesus changed him. No longer was he “a son of thunder;” now he was the “beloved disciple,” ready to write some of the greatest words about God’s love that anyone has ever written (the Gospel of John and 1, 2, 3, John). God is able to transform anyone who comes to Him through Jesus. Will you go to God to be transformed?

1 John 4:7

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Questions: Who is Love? Where does love come from? Have you been born of God?

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Mary

Week of April 12-17, 2021

There are as many as six ladies named Mary in the New Testament. The three most famous are: Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Today we are going to talk about Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

While Jesus was here on earth, He spent His time teaching people about God and what it means to have a personal relationship with God. One of the people who really enjoyed Jesus' teaching was Mary of Bethany.

One day Jesus came to Bethany, the village where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived. Martha welcomed Jesus into her house and Mary, Martha's sister, sat down at Jesus' feet and listened to His teaching. Martha wasn't too happy with Mary for sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to His teaching because there was a lot of work to do. Martha felt that it wasn't right that Mary sit and listen to Jesus teach while Martha did all of the work.

After a while, Martha made her case to Jesus. Martha said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me" (Luke 10:40). When Jesus had heard Martha's concern, He said, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42).

Do you think Jesus was angry with Martha? No. He loved Martha. He wanted her to slow down for a moment, to not be distracted with her long *to do* list, and spend time with Him.

We can do life with God or we can do life without God. A long time ago in Bethany, Mary was learning to do life *with* God. She was listening carefully to the voice of the Good Shepherd. She was soaking in His words. She was choosing the good portion—relationship with God—out of which she would live her life day in and day out.

We too can choose the good portion—relationship with God! Jesus promised that once He left this earth He would send another Helper, the Holy Spirit, who would be with us forever (John 14:15). The Holy Spirit can connect us to God the Father and Jesus Christ right now if we will call upon the name of the LORD and be saved (Romans 10:13)!

Psalm 46:10

"Be still, and know that I (the LORD) am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"

Questions: Are you more like Martha or Mary? Are you doing life with God or without Him?

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Nicodemus

Week of April 19-24, 2021

Nicodemus was a man who studied the Bible very hard. Nicodemus knew a lot of things about God, but there was a very important thing that Nicodemus did not know. Nicodemus did not know that he needed to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God.

One night Nicodemus came to Jesus and said, “Rabbi (Hebrew word for teacher), we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:2-3).

Nicodemus was very confused by Jesus’ words. How can someone be born again? No one can become a baby again! But, Jesus wasn’t talking about becoming a baby again. He was talking about a different kind of birth—a spiritual birth by the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be born again by the Holy Spirit? It means that we have passed from death unto life—we have stopped looking to ourselves for direction and truth and we have begun looking to God for direction and truth. Our first birth was into the creation that we see all around us right now. Our second birth is into Christ and the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God is everywhere, but only God’s children can see God’s kingdom clearly. Why? Because only God’s children are *born again* and Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Do you see God’s kingdom clearly? Is God your God from day to day or are you going your own way and doing your own thing? In the book of Isaiah in the Bible we read that our problem as humans is that, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). God doesn’t want us to go in our own way like sheep. He wants us to return to the Shephard and Overseer of our souls, His Son, Jesus Christ.

Jesus told Nicodemus that Nicodemus must be born again in order to see the Kingdom of God. The same is true for you and me. We must be born again to see God’s Kingdom! *Coaches, now would be a great time to share your being-born-again story with your team!*

1 John 5:4

For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Questions: What are sheep like? How are we like sheep? What is faith?

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Jesus (Invitation Week)

Week of April 26-May 1, 2021

Who is Jesus? He is our great God and Savior, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Son of God, the Word of God made flesh, *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.

Do you know Jesus? What does it mean to know somebody? When we know somebody—*really* know somebody—we know their thoughts and their heart. We know what they are thinking about and what they feel. We know when they are happy and when they are sad. God made us to know Him and He wants to know us. God already knows everything about us, but He wants more than that—He wants to have a relationship with us.

God is passionate about life. In fact, God *is* life. God is exploding, abundant, unending life. There is no one like Him. He is perfect. He is beautiful beyond all things. He is the Glorious One, and all of His works are wonderful.

What separates us from the God who is Light, Love, and Life? *Sin*. Sin is that ugly rebellious spirit in us that says “no” to God and wanders off to live life away from God however we want. The human problem is that, “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). What happens when we turn from God and do life by ourselves and for ourselves? We end up making a mess of everything. We try to follow God’s laws, but we end up doing all kinds of ugly, unloving, and dirty things.

Who can save us from our sins and from our sinful hearts? Jesus Christ can. The penalty for sin is death. We all deserve to die for going our own way and breaking God’s commands. The good news of the Gospel is that Jesus died on a cross for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Jesus died so that we could live! To live is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Do you want to turn your life over to God today so that He will forever be your King and you shall forever be His child?

If you want to receive Jesus as your Savior and King, you can pray this prayer with me today. Everyone please close your eyes and bow your heads. **“Father, I know that I have sinned by going my own way and doing my own thing. I am truly sorry. I now want to give my life to you. Please forgive me and join me to the nature of your Son, Jesus Christ. Please cause me to pass from death into life. I believe that your Son, Jesus Christ, died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite you, Jesus, to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please cause me to be born again so that I might do your will forever. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.”**

If you have been born again by God’s Spirit, you are now a child of God! Please let your coach know what God has done in your heart! We want to rejoice with you!

1 Chronicles 16:23

Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day.

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Peter

Week of May 3-8, 2021

Jesus changes people. There was a man named Simon. Simon's name meant "he has heard." The question is what or who did Simon hear?

Simon and his brother Andrew were fishermen. One day while they were putting their nets into the water, Jesus came to them and Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). What do you think Simon and Andrew did when they heard Jesus? "Immediately they left their nets and followed him" (Matthew 4:20).

What would you do if you heard Jesus speak to you? Would you immediately leave your whole life and follow Him?

Jesus changed Simon's name to "Peter." Peter name means "rock." When we hear Jesus and follow Jesus, our lives become rock-solid, because Jesus is the Rock. Through his faith in Jesus, Peter was walking in the truth of the Bible: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Psalm 18:2).

Peter by himself was wishy-washy. One time he walked on water, but when he looked at the storm instead of at Jesus, he started to sink. Sometimes Peter got really mad at people. Once he cut off a man's ear and Jesus had to put the man's ear back in its place and heal it. Other times Peter made promises that he could not keep. He told Jesus he would stick with Jesus always—even if he had to die to do it—only to deny Jesus three times when it really mattered.

We are all wishy-washy in ourselves, but God is a rock to anyone who believes in Him. When Peter was filled with God's Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, God Himself became the Rock at the center of Peter's life. On that day, Peter stood in the power of God before the world and preached the Gospel of forgiveness and salvation to the very people who had put God's Son to death. Peter wasn't looking at the storm in the eyes of the people that day—He was looking squarely at the Rock, Jesus Christ. If you will trust Jesus like Peter did, your life will become rock-solid in Jesus just like Peter's life did.

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, **and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and were speaking the word of God with boldness.**

Questions: What do you do when you feel confused or scared? Who is the Rock?

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Stephen

Week of May 10-15, 2021

In the Book of *The Acts of the Apostles* in the Bible we meet a man named Stephen. God describes Stephen as a man who was “full of grace and power, who was doing great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8).

Stephen’s name means “crown” or “wreath.” A long time ago, it was common for the winner of an Olympic game to get a wreath to wear as a crown. Can a person be a crown? The Apostle Paul thought so. One time Paul said, “Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved” (Philippians 4:1).

What does Paul mean by calling people his crown? Paul thought of helping people know Jesus as the goal like an athlete thinks of winning the race as the goal. If an athlete wins a race, he or she gets the crown. When Paul helped someone know Jesus Christ, Paul would get a crown—a new brother or sister in Christ Jesus.

Did Paul help Stephen know Jesus? No. Actually it was the other way around. Stephen helped Paul know Jesus. Therefore, in a sense, Paul was Stephen’s crown.

How did Stephen help Paul know Jesus? Stephen came to know Jesus before Paul did. It was through people like Stephen that Paul saw the great power of God on display after Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose again.

Not only did Stephen show people like Paul great signs and wonders from God, Stephen also told people like Paul about Jesus. One day Stephen preached a mighty and true sermon about Jesus Christ’s life and death. Stephen’s sermon made a lot of people very angry because they weren’t ready to surrender their lives to Jesus. Paul was one of those angry people.

Stephen’s words were from God and they were like seeds in Paul’s heart. As time passed, God’s word grew in Paul’s heart and eventually Paul believed in Jesus, was born again, and became a man who was full of the Holy Spirit like Stephen. Praise God for people like Stephen who share the Good News of Jesus Christ with their friends, their neighbors, and even their enemies!

Philippians 2:13

For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Questions: Are you letting God work in you? What is something that God is doing in your life this week? Do you know anybody who doesn’t know Jesus yet? How do you think God wants to use your life to help other people know Jesus?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Paul, Timothy, and Titus

Week of May 17-22, 2021

Before Jesus ascended into heaven to be at the right hand of God, Jesus told His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who follows and learns from a teacher. A disciple of Jesus Christ is someone who follows and learns from Jesus.

The Apostle Paul was one of Jesus’ disciples. Paul became one of Jesus’ disciples in a very dramatic way. Paul was travelling to the city of Damascus and all of a sudden Jesus appeared to Paul in a blinding light. At this meeting of Jesus and Paul, Paul realized how mixed up and wrong he was and how he needed to surrender his life to the Lord Jesus. After this meeting with Jesus, Paul realized that he had become physically blind by the brightness of Jesus’ coming but that for the first time in his life he could truly see!

A few days after Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus God healed Paul’s physical eyes, but Paul had learned his lesson: sometimes people with good eyes are blind because they don’t see Jesus for who He really is!

Paul spent the rest of his life after his dramatic encounter with Jesus helping other people see Jesus. Paul was making disciples just like Jesus had commanded!

Some of Paul’s disciples are named in the Bible. Paul worked with men like Timothy and Titus. As Timothy and Titus learned to follow Jesus like Paul followed Jesus, Timothy and Titus were able to go out from Paul and make more disciples on their own.

All of God’s children are called to follow Jesus and learn how to teach other people how to follow Jesus too! If we are God’s children, we are growing up in the faith of Jesus Christ! Some of us are young in Christ. Some of us are a bit more grown up in Christ. But, none of us have fully grown up in Christ! Someday God will make all of His children perfect in Christ, but for now, we are called to walk daily with the Lord and teach other people to do the same!

Psalm 23:3

He restores my soul. **He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**

Questions: How can we learn from Jesus? Do you have any friends who are helping you to grow up in Jesus? How can you help your friends grow up in Jesus?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!