

CHAMP SPORTS DEVOTIONAL



SPRING 2022

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

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Season Schedule

Practices Begin: Week of March 14
Uniform Distribution: Week of March 14
Game Schedules: Week of March 21
Opening Day: Saturday, March 26
Spring Break: April 11 – 18 (No practices or games)
Season Ends: Saturday, May 21

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

Join us weekly for Sunday morning
worship at 9:45 AM in person or via livestream.

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Welcome to CHAMP Sports!

Week of March 14-18

Welcome to CHAMP Sports! We are excited that you are here!

This season during devotion time we are going to talk a lot about Jesus. We are going to talk about things that He did in the past, things that He is doing right now, and things that He will do in the future. Jesus is alive! He is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, but that doesn't mean He isn't here right now with us. He is!

Jesus promised that when He returned from earth to His Father in heaven, He wouldn't leave us alone. Jesus told His disciples right before He went to die on the cross for our sins, "Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:19-23).

Jesus wants to live inside of each one of us. He wants to make His home with us. Jesus wants to be the Lord of our lives. He wants to teach us every day and help us grow strong spiritually. Jesus wants us to know Him, and He wants to know us. He wants to be our closest friend.

Knowing Jesus is extremely important. In the Bible, Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). The only way that we can have eternal life is by knowing the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent.

Knowing God is something that we do in the deepest part of ourselves. What is the deepest part of us? It is our spirit. Each person whom God has made has a spirit and a body. It is in our spirits where we know God in the deepest possible way because, "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Do you want to know God? If you do, tell God that you want to know Him, and pray and ask Him to help you know Him better.

1 John 5:12

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Questions: How do we receive the Son of God? Where is Jesus right now?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Preached Righteousness!

Week of March 21-26

There is a question that we each have to think about every day. The question is, “What is right?” Sometimes the answer is very clear. Sometimes the answer isn’t so clear. So, how can we determine the difference between right and wrong?

Is there anyone who always knows what is right and what is wrong? Yes. God does. God is never confused about what is right and what is wrong. He never has to think hard about it. It is always obvious to Him.

God not only *knows* what is right and wrong; God *decides* what is right and wrong. God is the Judge. God is the *final* Judge. If we want to know what is right and wrong, we must find out what God thinks is right and wrong. How do we do that?

There are a number of things we can do to figure out what God thinks is right and wrong. First, God made each one of us with a conscience. Our consciences have a basic sense of what is right and wrong according to God. God says that He has written His law on each of our hearts (Romans 2:15). However, our natural hearts are deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), and therefore we can’t just trust our hearts.

Who can we trust? God wants us to trust Him. Have you ever leaned on something? If you lean on something, you want that thing to be strong so that you don’t fall. God tells us not to lean on ourselves: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). But how do we lean on God?

We lean on God by believing in His Son, Jesus, and receiving His Holy Spirit. Jesus wants to live inside of us. When Jesus lived here on earth, He went around telling people about God’s kingdom. He told us that we could be saved out of Satan’s kingdom of sin and darkness and transferred into God’s kingdom of light and truth. If we believe in Jesus and we are born again by God’s Spirit, Jesus will live inside of us. He will fill us with God’s righteousness. He will help us understand the Bible. He will teach us what is right and wrong in God’s eyes, and He will lead us in the way everlasting. Do you know Jesus? Does Jesus live inside of you?

James 2:23

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

Questions: How well do you know God? Do you believe God? Are you God’s friend?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Taught in Parables!

Week of March 28-April 2

Jesus did a lot of teaching while He was here on earth. His teaching was often straightforward and simple. He talked about loving God and loving our neighbors. He talked about God's kingdom and what it means to have a personal relationship with the Father. Jesus often spoke plainly, but He also taught in parables. What is a parable?

A parable is a story that helps us understand a moral or spiritual truth.

Some things are easy to see and study. We can look at a grapevine and see how it is rooted in the dirt. We can look at how the vine and the branches are connected. We can watch as little grapes begin to grow and become ripe. These things are easy to see. What is harder to see is how God's children are connected to Jesus. Thus, Jesus tells us that He is the Vine and we who are God's children are the branches. We can't see our connection to Jesus with our physical eyes, but we can understand what our spiritual connection to Jesus is like because He is the vine and we are the branches. We understand that the fruit of the Spirit that God wants in each of our lives happens as the life of God flows into us and through us.

God's creation is full of parables. God tells us in Proverbs 6 that we can learn about being wise and working hard from ants. Ants have no ruler, but they work hard gathering food when it is time to gather food in the summer, and then they have enough food for themselves in the winter. Can you think of any animals that teach us something about what God is like? [The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, The Holy Spirit descending like a dove.]

God tells us that "his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). We can easily understand God's power and authority from the creation. God's creation itself is a parable! God's creation tells us about who God is and what He is like!

Jesus taught in parables so that we could understand God's truth better. Jesus taught over thirty parables in the Bible. Can you think of one? Do you know what that parable means?

Psalm 86:11

Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth.

Questions: Have you ever prayed and asked God to teach you His truth? If not, will you?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Destroys the Works of the Devil!

Week of April 4-9

Satan has many names. Some of his names are: the devil, the deceiver, and the ancient serpent. The name devil means “divider.” The devil’s goal is to separate people from God. He does not want people to know God or be a part of God’s family. But, Jesus destroys the works of the devil!

How does Jesus destroy the works of the devil? Jesus is unique among people. There is nobody like Him. Jesus is God’s one-of-a-kind Son. He is divine. He was together with the Father and the Holy Spirit before anything was created.

When our first parents, Adam and Eve, decided to go their own way and do whatever was right in their own eyes, they sinned against God and became like the devil, who has been sinning from the beginning (1 John 3:8). Once Adam and Eve joined the devil in his rebellion against God, they were separated from God and they no longer had a close relationship with Him. There was a big gap between God and people. So, God sent His own Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him (John 3:17).

In Bethlehem, over a thousand years ago, The Word of God, God’s Son, became flesh and lived among us. He was given the name Jesus, “for He would save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). When God’s Son was born into this world, He was the first and only Person who was both fully God and fully man. This is the wonder of Jesus. There is no one else like Him, and this is why, “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In order to destroy the works of the devil, Jesus needed to live a perfect human life. And He did! Jesus was perfect because He never once sinned. Jesus said of Himself, “And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29). Who sent Jesus? The Father did! Jesus’ relationship with His Father as a human being was perfect!

Nothing ever came between Jesus and His Father until Jesus became sin on the cross and died for us so that we might live through Him. The devil was never able to divide Jesus from His Father, and so Jesus was able to destroy the works of the devil! When we believe in Jesus, He becomes our Lord, and we become a part of His perfect relationship with the Father. This is what it means to be saved!

Exodus 14:13

Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today.

Questions: What does it mean to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Draws the Nations to Himself!

Week of April 19-23

Jesus did some pretty incredible miracles while He was here on earth. Can you think of some of the miracles that He did? Most people were excited to see the amazing things that Jesus did, but not everyone.

In the Bible, we read about the Pharisees. The Pharisees were men who had set themselves apart to the task of doing all of the righteousness found in God's law. Pharisees lived very strict lives. They had lots of rules about what should be done and what shouldn't be done. They were famous in Israel, and many people admired them for trying so hard to do everything in God's law perfectly.

The Pharisees enjoyed being celebrities in Israel, so they weren't too happy when people started to notice Jesus. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Pharisees got particularly angry because everyone was talking about the great miracle that Jesus had done. Many people had seen Lazarus alive and had believed in Jesus. Jesus was becoming famous among the people, and the Pharisees couldn't stand it. "So the Pharisees said to one another, 'You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him'" (John 12:19).

Was it a good thing that the people's attention was turning away from the Pharisees and towards Jesus? Yes, of course. God wants each one of us to focus our attention on His Son. John the Baptist understood this. God sent John the Baptist to preach the message of God's kingdom, but when Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized, what did John say? He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

As we see our own hearts turning to Jesus, we should celebrate what God is doing in our lives. Jesus is the great hero of history. He is the one who conquered sin, the devil, and the grave. He is the one who leads us out of bondage to sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

In the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, we catch glimpses of the amazing end of history. Jesus draws people from all nations of the earth to Himself so that we can live with God forever: "And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God'" (Revelation 21:3). God has a wonderful plan for His children. Are you a child of God?

Psalm 96:2

Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

Questions: What are some of the wonderful things that God has done?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Conquered Death! (Invitation Week)

Week of April 25-30

The Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve first lived was a beautiful place. It was full of trees and rivers. There was gold and beautiful smells and precious stones. It was a land of light. It was good. But then Adam and Eve separated themselves from God. They walked away from God in order to do their own thing. They cut themselves off from Life Himself. Ever since that day in the Garden of Eden when the man and his wife ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, death has been one of man's greatest problems.

Death is not beautiful. It is dark and lonely. It is sad and horrible. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, death entered the world and spread to all people. This was a huge problem. Death shows mercy to no one. Death is cold and callous. Death is a terrible master. But, God is greater than death, and He made an awesome promise to the world.

You can read God's promise in the book of Isaiah in the Bible. God says, "And he (the LORD of hosts) will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation'" (Isaiah 25:7-9).

Jesus fulfilled this promise. Jesus swallowed up death forever! Jesus destroyed death on the cross! Jesus defeated death by rising from the dead by the power of God. Now we can say, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:54-55)!

Now is the time to be glad and rejoice in God's salvation. Today is the day to be saved. God will save you today if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. In the book of Hebrews, God says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 4:7). Do you hear his voice today? Do you want God to save you?

If you want to believe in the Lord Jesus today, please listen carefully as we talk about the gospel and what it means to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. *[Coaches, please share The Gospel devotion on the next page and then give your players a chance to write their own names on their response cards if they have chosen to believe in Jesus for the first time today. Please return all response cards to us at the equipment shed.]*

Isaiah 25:9

Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

The Gospel

Invitation Week Continued (April 25-30)

What is the Gospel? The Gospel is God's good news about His Son Jesus Christ.

What is the good news? The good news is that God sent Jesus Christ into the world to save sinners.

How did we become sinners? By disobeying God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Each one of us has also disobeyed God.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

The bad news is that:

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).

The good news is that:

"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

How do we receive God's free gift?

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

What does it mean to "believe in the Lord Jesus"?

It means that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died to pay the penalty for our sins, that He was buried, and on the third day God raised Him from the dead. It means that we receive Christ as our Savior and surrender our lives to Him as our personal Lord and Master.

Jesus promised, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). Today, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

If you want to believe in Jesus and confess Him as your Savior and Lord today, please raise your hand. If you have raised your hand, please pray this prayer with me.

Heavenly Father, today I believe in your Son, Jesus. I believe that He died to pay the penalty for my sins and that He was raised from the dead so that I could be justified and receive eternal life in His name. Today, I surrender my life to Jesus as my Lord and Master, and acknowledge Him before men. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me! Amen.

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Heals the Brokenhearted!

Week of May 2-7

There is a book in the Bible called Lamentations. A lament is a poem or a song that talks about something that is very sad. In the Book of Lamentations, the prophet Jeremiah talks about how sad it was when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed around 2,500 years ago!

Jeremiah starts out by saying, “How lonely sits the city that was full of people!” (Lamentations 1:1). He describes Jerusalem as having been like a princess, but now she has become a slave. She used to be a beautiful city full of wonderful things, but now she is burned with fire.

Can you imagine what it would be like to see the city that was once radiant with life become a city that is empty and broken down? It would be very sad, but not as sad as what happened when the whole world broke when Adam and Eve rebelled against God.

When God made the earth and everything in it, He looked at what He had made, and it was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Now, we know that when God thinks something is very good, it is very good indeed. But the world didn’t stay very good. When sin and death entered into the world, creation began to groan under the weight of corruption. Things were not so beautiful as before. Thorns sprouted, pain came, and human suffering began. Because of sin and death, all of our hearts break. The world is not as it used to be. The world is not as it should be. But, there is hope because Jesus heals the brokenhearted!

Someday, the creation will be delivered from its suffering. Someday soon, Jesus will wipe away every tear from the eyes of God’s children “death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4). In that day, God will have made all things new, and we who are God’s children will be with Him and He will be our God and we will be His people.

At that time, Jesus will have fully healed our broken hearts, but even now Jesus is healing our broken hearts. We all have sad days in this world. On those days, we must remember to turn our hearts to Jesus and receive His comfort and encouragement. God sent Jesus to heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1). He is able to encourage us no matter what we are going through. Will you let Jesus heal your heart when it is broken?

Psalm 147:3

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Questions: What do you do when you are sad? Have you experienced God’s comfort?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Pours Out the Holy Spirit!

Week of May 9-14

Have you ever been thirsty? There is a good reason that you were thirsty. Our bodies need water! When we are just born, our bodies are almost 75% water. As we get older, our bodies are about 65% water. Every day we have to add water to our bodies to stay healthy. If we don't, our bodies will become tired, and eventually we will get very sick.

One day, Jesus was celebrating one of the feasts that God commanded the Jewish people to celebrate. The feast was called the Feast of Tabernacles. A tabernacle is a small tent. During the Feast of Tabernacles, the people were supposed to put up tents and live in them for seven days while they celebrated the feast. The reason that God wanted the people to live in tents for seven days was so that they would remember how God "made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 23:43).

The feast of Tabernacles was the happiest and most joyous feast that the people of Israel celebrated each year. God commanded the people about the feast, "You shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days" (Leviticus 23:40). Thus, the Feast of Tabernacles was seven days of rejoicing. What were the people celebrating? They were celebrating God and how He had brought them out of slavery in Egypt, provided for them as they travelled through the wilderness, and brought them into the Promised Land of Israel.

One year, as Jesus celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, "On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37-39).

Why did Jesus do this? He did this because God had promised to send the Holy Spirit and Jesus was about to fulfill God's promise. It was a time of great celebration! If you believe in Jesus, God has given you His Holy Spirit. As you learn to rest in God and allow His life into your heart, rivers of God's living water will flow out of you into the world around you! That is something that we can celebrate forever and ever!

John 7:38

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'

Questions: Are you full of the Holy Spirit? What is God's joy like?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!

Jesus Judges the World in Righteousness!

Week of May 16-21

God has appointed His Son, Jesus, to judge the world in righteousness.

Psalms 98 speaks of the day in which the LORD judges the earth as a wonderful day: "Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises! Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who dwell in it! Let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills sing for joy together before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity" (Psalm 98:4, 7-9).

For God's children, the day in which Jesus judges the world will be a wonderful day because Jesus will make everything right. However, some people will not be happy when Jesus comes to judge the world in righteousness because they are not God's children. In fact, they are the enemies of God.

Who is an enemy of God? God tells us: "Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

What does it mean to be a friend of the world? A friend of the world is someone who agrees with Satan. Satan wants to be *like* God instead of *worshiping* God. Satan wants to do whatever is right in his own eyes instead of obeying God's voice. Satan wants to be the center of all things instead of letting God be God.

When Jesus comes to judge the world in righteousness, Satan and everyone on Satan's side will be found guilty of committing high treason against the Most High God, and they will be sentenced to the Lake of Fire. This will be a terrible moment, like when Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea, but it will be a glorious moment, because it will be the moment when God finally puts down forever the rebellion that Satan started.

If we believe in Jesus and we are born again of the Spirit, we will be exceedingly happy when Jesus comes to judge the world in righteousness. He will look at us and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:21). What a wonderful thing to hear!

Psalm 82:8

Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations!

Questions: Will Jesus say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" when He comes to judge the earth?

Please remember to pray for your team and their families!