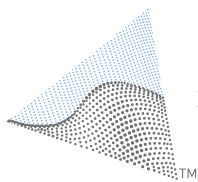


Alive in 5

Youth Series





ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
YOUTH MINISTRIES



YOUTH ALIVE®
STUDENTS REACHING STUDENTS

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CONTENTS

WEEK ONE

Alive in 5: The Good News. 4

WEEK TWO

Alive in 5: God is Love 11

WEEK THREE

Alive in 5: Our Sin Divides Us from God 18

WEEK FOUR

Alive in 5: Jesus Paid for Our Sin, Then Came Back to Life . . 24

WEEK FIVE

Alive in 5: We Need to Decide to Put Our Faith in God. 29

WEEK SIX

Alive in 5: The Holy Spirit Will Help Us Live for God 36



- Message Title:** Alive in 5: The Good News
- Primary Text:** Roman 1:16
- Purpose:** This is the first message in a six-part series. This message serves as an introduction to some of the biggest principles of the gospel. Through Romans 1:16, the gospel will be understood as God’s power at work for the salvation of all who believe, and that we can be unashamed of the gospel because of what this good news means for us.
- Takeaways:** God puts His awesome power to work on our behalf; salvation is available for every person who believes; and we can and should be unashamed of the gospel as a result of God’s awesome power and salvation.
- Needs:** Space for the icebreaker/game, energetic music to play during the game
- Worship Suggestions:** Glorious Day [CCLI #7081388]
Living Hope [CCLI #7106807]
Rooftops [CCLI #5875153] or The Stand [CCLI #4705248]

ICEBREAKER/GAME IDEA: DUEL OR FINGER JOUSTING

This is a physically active game. Have each student pair off with another (it may be best to have them pair off with a member of the same sex). Each student should grasp the opponent’s right hand as though they were going to arm wrestle, while placing their left hand behind their back. Both students should then extend their right hand index fingers so they are pointing at their opponent (this is the jousting finger or “the lance”). The object of the match is for one student to touch the other student with their index finger. They can use almost any technique to touch their opponent with their pointed index finger with just two limitations: they cannot separate hands, and they cannot use their feet or other hand/arm in an offensive manner. The matches begin when you say “go” or “duel” or “joust!” You can make this a tournament by having successive rounds; the loser of each round sits down or stands to the side, while the winners find another partner. Have some energetic music kick in when you start each round. Generally the person who is the strongest or the quickest will win the tournament. Talk about this, because it will come up in the introduction to the message.

You can read more about the basics of finger jousting at <http://www.fingerjoust.com/basics.htm>.



ALIVE IN 5: THE GOOD NEWS

by Rev. Lee Rogers

INTRODUCTION

I want to talk to you tonight about good news! As a matter of fact, I recently received some good news. *(Share a piece of good news you personally received recently, or consider sharing the best news you've ever received in your life. For the sake of the progression of the introduction, avoid talking about the gospel as good news for now.)* Tell me about some good news you've received recently. *(Interact with the students and ask them to share what their good news is. Have fun with it—make a big deal out of what they share.)*

That is amazing good news! Just incredible! The Bible has a word for good news. It's a word that is used in churches and by Christians all the time, but a lot of people don't know the literal meaning of the word in the original language. Does anyone know what the word for "good news" is? *(See if anyone knows it and congratulate them if they do. If not, play it up even more.)* The word for "good news" is "GOSPEL!" That's right—it's a word you may have heard many times. When you hear "gospel" you probably think about Jesus, but it literally means "good news" or "good story." It's absolutely true! The gospel is good news for every person who has ever lived on the earth! The good news is this—God, who is powerful enough to create the entire universe, puts His power to work on our behalf in order to save us.

Earlier we played a game (finger jousting), and it ended the way a lot of strength-based games end—the strongest or fastest person won. The winner put his or her power of size, strength, or speed at work to secure victory. And they won because they wanted to win; maybe for personal glory, to show off, or in order to be first. Good for them! But what's even better is when someone puts his or her power to work to benefit others. And the best news of all is that God's awesome power is at work for the entire human race—for you and for me and for every person who has ever lived. That is good news! That is the gospel!

Today we are beginning a new series that will help us better understand and share this good news with others. It's called *Alive in 5*. We will discover together how we have life—how we are alive—through five key points of the gospel. Over the next few weeks we will discover that God is love; our sins divide us from God; Jesus paid for our sin and then came back to life; we need to make a decision to put our faith in God; and the Holy Spirit helps us live for God. This is the gospel! Not only is it good news, it's the best news! Now let's take a look at the Scripture for today.



SCRIPTURE

Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile.”

Let’s break this down piece by piece so we understand it well.

BODY

- I. The good news (the gospel) about Jesus Christ is the power of God at work.
 - A. “This Good News about Christ...is the power of God at work.”
 1. God puts His power to work—the same power that spoke the universe into existence—on our behalf.
 2. The word for power (*dunamis*) means “power, might, strength, force, ability, deed of power,” and is often behind the scriptural concepts of might and miracles.¹
 - B. This word is used throughout Scripture to describe “a personal God who uniquely possesses power” and uses it to help and save His people:²
 1. Power to deliver the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt: “But I have spared you for a purpose—to show you my **power** and to spread my fame throughout the earth” (Exodus 9:16).
 2. Wonder-working power for redemption: “You are the God of great wonders! You demonstrate your awesome **power** among the nations. By your strong arm, you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob and Joseph” (Psalm 77:14-15).
 3. Strong power that rescues: “O Sovereign LORD, the **strong** one who rescued me, you protected me on the day of battle” (Psalm 140:7).
 4. Power of the Cross: “The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very **power** of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18).
 - C. ILLUSTRATION—Have you ever played a video game and came back to life after you died? It’s called a “respawn,” and usually it means you can resume the game where

¹ “δύναμις G1539.” *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Zondervan, 2014.

² Moo, Douglas J., *The Epistle to the Romans*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Accordance electronic ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.



WEEK ONE

you left off. In real life, no one has that kind of saving power, but God does! (*Insert your own favorite video game illustration here. If you don't play video games, use a different illustration about power.*) God puts His power to save at work in order to give us the biggest do-over (or respawn) of all time: salvation from our sins.

- D. God uses His awesome power to save us! But not just you or me, it's for all humankind for all time.
- II. The power of God is working for the salvation of everyone who believes.
 - A. "Saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile."
 - 1. "Gentile" means anyone who isn't from the nation of Israel, or every non-Jewish person.³ Not only did this mean Gentiles were from a different nationality, but it also generally meant their political, territorial, and religious affiliations were different.⁴ Simply put, Gentiles were entirely different from Jews.
 - 2. This is really important because in those days there was a lot of racial and ethnic strife, including fighting and wars, between Jews and Gentiles. Douglas Moo wrote, "We find it difficult to appreciate just how deep the divide between Jew and Gentile was for first-century Jews."⁵
 - 3. But the gospel is greater than these divisions and conflict!
 - B. In other words, Paul is saying the gospel has overcome all racial and ethnic divides.
 - 1. There is no racism when it comes to salvation—the Cross applies to all people from all nations!
 - 2. No one is exempt from God's love, and everyone who believes will be saved!
 - 3. God's love is perfect. It does not discriminate because it is available to all.
 - 4. God's power crosses all cultural lines.
 - C. All of us need saving!
 - 1. One of the things that unites all humanity is sin—we all have a sin problem.
 - 2. We can also be united in salvation because salvation is available for all if we are willing to believe.

³ de Lacey, D. R. "Gentile" in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. InterVarsity Press, 1993.

⁴ Huffman, Douglas. "Gentile" in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

⁵ Moo, Douglas J. "Romans." In *Romans to Philemon*, vol. 3 of *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: New Testament*. Zondervan, 2002.



- III. God's power and salvation gives us the courage to be unashamed.
- A. "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ."
- B. The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the church at Rome, and is telling them about his intense desire to come to Rome to proclaim the gospel. Why was he so eager to go to Rome?
1. Rome was the center of the ancient world in which Paul lived, and he wanted to boldly confront the culture, evils, and misguidedness of Rome with the power of God.
 2. One commentator writes: "He is ready to challenge the philosophies and religions in Rome that vie for attention, because he knows, on the basis of his experience in the East, that God's power is at work in the proclamation of the good news and that it is able to transform lives."⁶
- C. In the same way, the transforming power of the gospel gives us the courage and boldness to proclaim it in our own culture.
1. We can proclaim Jesus and the power of the Cross to our friends, neighbors, and even our family.
 2. God gives us the courage to challenge the misguided beliefs and evils of our time, just like the apostle Paul did!
- D. Embracing Jesus without shame is an important part of being one of His followers.
1. Jesus said, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father and with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).
 2. He also said, "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).
 3. It's the power of the gospel at work in our lives that gives us the courage and the boldness to be unashamed.
- E. ILLUSTRATION—(*Consider giving your own illustration of what it means to be unashamed of the gospel. Talk about a time in your life when you made a definitive stand or declaration of your faith.*) Can I ask you a hard question? If I look at your

⁶ Harrison, Everett F. and Donald A. Hagner. "Romans." In *Romans-Galatians*, vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition*, edited by Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, 19-239. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008.



WEEK ONE

life on social media (your profile, your pictures, your posts), or your life at school, will I see a person who is unashamed of the gospel? Is Jesus present in your posts or your friendships? Or are you living a public life that keeps your faith private? Are you ashamed or embarrassed to be known as a Christian? Do you need to experience the power of the gospel in a fresh way that leaves you unashamed?

CONCLUSION/ALTAR

I want to challenge you with this question—is this good news at work in your life? It's not complicated, it is beautiful and powerful. God's power is at work for your salvation and all you need to do is believe. Then Scripture says when we believe, God's power and salvation gives us the strength to be unashamed. For the sake of simplicity, I suggest that you will find yourself in one of two groups at this moment. Some of you are in the group that has allowed the good news to thoroughly saturate your life, and you are unashamed of God and what He has done through Jesus Christ. You are not ashamed of being a follower of Jesus or of the good news. You don't shy away from talking about it when the opportunity comes. If that is you—if you find yourself in the group of the unashamed—that is amazing and awesome! Keep going! Never stop!

The rest of us may be in the group that has not yet fully allowed the power of the gospel to work in our lives. Maybe we feel shame or embarrassment about our faith or our identity as Christians. Maybe we've never accepted God into our lives at all—in other words, we haven't put our faith in God. Or maybe we just haven't put our faith in God *fully or completely*.

What group do you find yourself in at this moment? What group do you want to be in? If I could make one thing happen for you, it would be to put you in the first group—for you to fully place your faith and trust in God and for you to be unashamed of the good news about Jesus. But that is not a decision I can make for you, and I can't make it happen to you. You need to make your own decision. What is your decision going to be?

(Ask everyone to bow their heads and close their eyes as they take a moment of personal reflection. Challenge the students to put their faith in God. Ask them if they want to put their faith in God right now. Lead them through a time of confessing with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, and expressing the belief in their hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead. Celebrate what God is doing as you conclude.)



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share some good news you received recently. What makes that news good?
2. The word “gospel” means good news. What makes the news about Jesus Christ good?
3. What are some ways God has used His power for humanity in the past? In what ways have you experienced God’s power helping you personally?
4. Salvation is available for the Jew and the Gentile—what does this mean? What can we learn from it?
5. How does the good news help us to be unashamed? In what ways have you been unashamed? In what ways have you been ashamed?
6. In what areas do you need to experience God’s power? Are you fully experiencing the good news about Jesus? What needs to change in order for that to happen?



WEEK TWO

Message Title:	Alive in 5: God is Love
Primary Text:	1 John 4:7-21
Purpose:	The purpose of this message is to make clear that God is love and everything He does flows from who He is—which is love.
Takeaways:	God’s love is perfect, it pursues you, and it will perform the miraculous in you.
Needs:	Chairs for the game
Worship Suggestions:	This is Amazing Grace [CCLI #6333821] Good Good Father [CCLI #7036612] O Come to The Altar [CCLI #7051511] (for the altar call)

ICEBREAKER/GAME IDEA: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

From jubed.com:

“Get everyone to sit in a circle and have one person in the middle. The person in the middle walks up to someone and says ‘Do you love your neighbor?’ They will then respond something like this: ‘Yes, except for the people who have brown hair’ or ‘Yes, except for the people wearing red’ or ‘Yes, except for (insert your own criteria here).’ Everyone in the circle who matches that criteria then needs to get up and find a new seat whilst the person in the middle tries to steal (sit) in someone’s seat. The person left standing becomes the new person in the middle. The other option is the person can respond ‘No,’ which means the two people either side of them have to switch seats while the person in the middle tries to steal their seat. This game is obviously physical so take necessary care!”

Source: <https://www.jubed.com/view/Do-you-love-your-neighbor>



ALIVE IN 5: GOD IS LOVE

by Rev. Jessica Bryan

INTRODUCTION

(This opening illustration is weaved and referenced back to throughout the message. You can substitute your own illustration/introduction here as an alternative, just keep in mind this will affect the later illustrations as well.)

Tonight we are going to talk about love! We've all experienced it at some point, most likely from our parents. Pastor Jessica Bryan tells the following story about parenting and love:

"A short while ago, my family and I were eating dinner when my four-year-old looked across the table and said, 'Mom, why do you have an emoji on your shirt?!' Surprised, I looked down and I laughed; I've always called it a smiley face. This past year, my husband and I bought our son a kid's version of a tablet computer, but because he has become so—we'll say passionate—about playing on it, we have had to put some boundaries on how often and how long he can use it. Needless to say, he gets very excited when he gets to spend some time using it. So naturally, when he recently asked me if he could play on his tablet, he was elated when I looked at him and said, 'Okay, you can have fifteen minutes before nap time.' His eyes lit up as a huge smile spread across his face and he blurted out, 'Mom, I love you, you're the bestest!'

Now, let's fast forward just fifteen minutes later—nap time has come! For some reason my children have a fascination with taking a toy with them to bed at nap time. As I announced nap time, my four-year-old jumped up and shouted, 'Can I take a toy to bed?!' I kindly reminded him of our rule: no toys in bed. Without missing a beat, he looked at me and said, 'Okay, fine then! I don't love you anymore.'

No one had to teach my son to respond in this way; it just came naturally. It was an inherent, innate, built-in response. It would be tempting to look at my son and say, 'Well, that's a child for you,' but the reality is that is human nature for you."

(Consider adding your own illustration here about an experience where someone was fickle in their commitment to love.)

Our human nature bases so much of its understanding of love on feelings. When someone or something makes us angry or causes us to no longer feel happiness, we might choose to say we no longer love that thing or person. So when we hear that God loves us, or that "God is love," we're inclined to ascribe our human nature onto Him. As a result of that



WEEK TWO

faulty perspective, a person may look at their own life and conclude that because he or she has most certainly disappointed God, there is no way God could love him or her. I want you to know that God's love does not work that way. God's love does not coincide with our human capacity to love. God's nature is not like our human nature.

SCRIPTURE

In 1 John 4:7-21, John, writing to the church, describes God's nature. He tells the church who He is, how He loves, and what His love accomplishes in us. He says:

“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers.”

TRANSITION—In 1 John 4:8 we find John's famous statement, “God is love.” But it is crucially important to understand that the reverse is not true that “love is God.” Not all love is of God. God is love and His love is perfect concerning you.



BODY

- I. God's love is perfect concerning you.
 - A. The very nature of God is love.
 1. It's important that we don't miss or confuse what it means when John says, "God is love." God's very nature is love, and we must get a firm grasp on this fact. Although He is loving, that is not just one attribute. The big picture is that everything God does flows from who He is, and He is the very essence and embodiment of love.
 2. When we experience blessing from His hand, it comes from love. The same is true when we experience discipline or correction from His hand. Everything He does concerning us comes from who He is, and He is love.
 3. ILLUSTRATION—(*Consider giving your own illustration of a time when you loved someone enough, or someone loved you enough, to make a decision that was not what they wanted at the time but it turned out for the best.*) Pastor Jessica Bryan reflects further on her son and the tablet: "It's like with my son, I let him have his tablet for a period of time because I love him. Yet, out of that same love, I won't allow him to have a toy in bed. I know that if I allow him to take a toy to bed, he will play with it rather than sleep and forfeit the rest he needs. As his mom I know it is not what is best for him even though he doesn't see it. How much more perfect—how much greater is God's love concerning you?!"
 - B. God's love is unchanging.
 1. His love is not fickle (changing frequently). His love does not change as a result of disappointment. His love does not renege when we fail or miss the mark. His love is perfect, it is unchanging, it is constant. It doesn't matter how big your sin is or if you mess up, His love for you still remains; it is a devoted love. You can trust it!
 2. "Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, 'For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.')



tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35–39).

C. TRANSITION—In fact, God’s love is so unchangeable that even when we offended Him, He still wanted a relationship with us. Even when we were not thinking of Him, He was thinking of us. God’s very nature is love and His love is in pursuit of you.

II. God’s love is in pursuit of you.

A. Love is a choice.

1. The truth is, God has no obligation (duty) to love us, but He is passionate about us. He could have left us in our hopeless situation, but He wants us. He sees us as we are, flaws and all, and still says, “I love you.”
2. God still chooses you in spite of you. He wants a relationship with you. He wants to do life with you.

B. Love is an action.

1. God knew that in order for us to do life together, action was required. God’s love for us is what initiated the sending of Jesus. There was a gap between God and man, and only Jesus could fill that gap!
2. Only Jesus could make right our wrong. Without Him, we were hopeless and would have always remained hopeless. Jesus was the only one who could fill the requirement of restoring our broken relationship with God. Jesus is the visible representation of God’s passion and pursuit of us.
3. “All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.’ ‘Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies.’ ‘Snake venom drips from their lips.’ ‘Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘They rush to commit murder. Destruction and misery always follow them. They don’t know where to find peace.’ ‘They have no fear of God at all.’ Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are” (Romans 3:12–20).



- C. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider giving your own illustration of a time when someone showed you love when you didn't deserve it or when you showed someone love even when they hurt you.)* Pastor Jessica Bryan reflects further on her son and what he said: “I felt it as my son looked at me full of disappointment and anger and said those words, ‘I don’t love you anymore.’ I admit that it stung a little, but I didn’t respond and say, ‘Yeah, well the same to you, buddy!’ No, I got down to where I could look him in the eyes and I said, ‘That’s okay, mommy will always, always love you—no matter what.’ Then I gave him the biggest hug. I wasn’t about to let him walk away without pursuing him. I will always choose to love my son—even if I don’t agree with or approve of what he does. I may even have to discipline him at times, but I want him to know that even then—no matter what—I will always love him. And I will always do everything I can to have a relationship with him.”
- D. TRANSITION—God’s love will always want you, and until Christ’s return He will want to have the broken relationship restored between you. God’s love is perfect concerning you, God’s love is in pursuit of you, and God’s love performs the miraculous in you.

III. God’s love performs the miraculous in you.

- A. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider giving an illustration about a time when someone received your undeserved love or when you received someone else’s undeserved love and the change that took place as a result.)* Pastor Jessica Bryan continues: “As I looked my son in the eyes and said those words, I saw big tears start to well up. As I wrapped my arms around his little frame and squeezed, I felt his once stiff posture wilt. A change was taking place. As I was holding him, I felt his arms begin to move and wrap around me as he hugged me in return. His little voice quivering whispered in my ear, ‘I’m sorry mommy, I do love you.’ His little brother was standing off to the side watching, and as he removed one of his arms from around me, he looked over at his little brother and said, ‘Come here, I love you too!’”
- B. God’s love empowers you to love.
1. As I said in the beginning of our message, the type of love that God embodies is not something we as humans are capable of. In our text, John tells us that after experiencing the love of God in our own lives and accepting the great gift of Christ’s atonement for our sins, the Holy Spirit begins to do a work within us. The Holy Spirit empowers us to do what we were formerly incapable of doing—truly loving others.
 2. The more we grow in our knowledge and understanding of God and His love, the



WEEK TWO

more we too will love. God not only loves us, He empowers us to love (in word and in action)!

- C. God empowers you to have confidence.
 - 1. John tells us that God’s love drives out fear.
 - 2. As our understanding of God and His love for us develops, so will our confidence in His love. This maturing empowers us and produces confidence. God’s love quiets fear!
- D. “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10).
- E. TRANSITION—As we come to terms with the truth that God is love, it changes everything!

CONCLUSION/ALTAR

In all your searching, you will never find a love like the love God has for you. His love is perfect concerning you, it is in pursuit of you, and it will perform the miraculous in you! God is love and He changes everything!

(Challenge students to accept the (1) call for salvation, (2) responsibility to love others, and (3) confidence found in Jesus.)

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Up to this point, what has been your understanding of God’s love?
2. What does it mean to you that God is love?
3. Has there ever been a time in your life when another Christian exemplified God’s love towards you? What was it like and how did it make you feel?
4. Has there ever been a time in your life when God had to say no because He loved you too much to say yes? What did that feel like in the moment? What did you learn?
5. Are you living in fear or in confidence? In what ways do you want God’s love to further change you?
6. Has being the recipient of God’s great love changed the way you view God? Has it changed the way you love others? How?



- Message Title:** Alive in 5: Our Sin Divides Us from God
- Primary Text:** Isaiah 59:2
- Purpose:** The purpose of this message is to discuss how and why our sin divides us from God.
- Takeaways:** Students will understand what sin is, why God hates it so much, and how to deal with it.
- Needs:** Provide illustrations from your own life. Suggestions are given for the type of illustration to use, but the story/image/metaphor should be personal.
- Worship Suggestions:** Won't Stop Now [CCLI #7111932]
One Thing Remains [CCLI #5508444]
No Longer Slaves [CCLI #7030123]
Reckless Love [CCLI #7089641]

ICEBREAKER/GAME IDEA: EGG, CHICKEN, ALBATROSS

This game is basically a rock, paper, scissors tournament with some twists. Every player starts at the rank of egg and pairs up to play rock, paper, scissors. As players win, they progress from being an egg to a chicken to an albatross, and if they lose, they keep their rank. When pairing up, eggs pair up with eggs, chickens with chickens, and albatrosses with albatrosses. Rather than the structured rounds of a tournament, the facilitator yells "Go!" to begin the game, and chaos ensues as players search for an opponent of like rank. As soon as they find a suitable opponent, they play rock, paper, scissors, adjust their ranks as needed, and move on to the next opponent independently. As players are walking around to find their next opponent, they must walk in way that signifies their rank. Eggs move around the room curled up in a squat, chickens move around with a little hunch and their thumbs in their armpits flapping like chicken wings, and the albatrosses move around with their arms out soaring majestically. One more thing: the winners of albatross games become zombies. Makes perfect sense, right? Zombies have no need to play childish games like rock, paper, scissors, so they walk around the room like zombies groaning and distracting other players.



ALIVE IN 5: OUR SIN DIVIDES US FROM GOD

by Rev. Chris McNaney

INTRODUCTION

(Note: You can substitute your own illustration/introduction here by talking about the current season you are in when you are sharing this message. Consider talking about your favorite parts about that season or ask for input from people in the room about which season is their favorite. There is a lot of room to mold this beginning into what you want as long as you end by talking about your favorite part about winter and then sickness as the downfall of winter.)

We finally have snow on the ground people! It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! I know it might be weird, but I prefer winter over summer. I love the snow, I love getting stranded at home, I love that I don't sweat the second I step outside, and I love that no one is making me go to the beach! Winter is the best! However, I will admit that winter does have its setbacks. I think the worst part about winter is all the sickness that goes around.

I think the average person is pretty busy these days, so I have absolutely no time to get sick. The last thing I want to do when I have a long to-do list is to have to stay home and eat soup while I get further behind. I'm sure you know what it's like when you have to miss a day or two of school. By the time you get back, algebra turned into calculus AND you missed four quizzes and a Spanish test AND you got stuck with the worst lab partner in the class. No one has time to get sick! Even when it's not me getting sick, I hate when people around me are sick. You know they are touching your stuff and breathing your air and there is just no way to escape their germs. So as inconvenient as it is, if you're sick, PLEASE stay home. I don't want you out infecting the rest of the world. Just. Stay. Home.

In the church world, there's this thing we talk about a lot like a sickness. It's as dangerous as it is contagious. It's a dark evil condition that has a 100 percent mortality rate. It's a sneaky ailment, so its symptoms can be hidden for long periods of time. You might not even know how bad you have it until it's too late. It's also resilient and impervious to most kinds of treatment. It's impossible to completely get rid of. This sickness is everywhere, and what may be the worst part is that everyone is already infected—Walking Dead style. You've got it. I've got it. Everyone you know has it. We call this pandemic, destructive, terrifying disease SIN.



We see this idea of sin come up all over history, so it's been a problem from the beginning of humanity and it's clearly something we encounter today as well. If you only know one thing about sin, you probably know that God does not want us to do it. That means it's really important that we educate ourselves about sin. Tonight we're going to talk about sin: what it is, why God hates it so much, what we can do to minimize our exposure, and how to treat ourselves for this sickness. Everything we talk about tonight is going to center around one idea: our sin divides us from God. We know this, because people have been saying it for thousands of years.

SCRIPTURE

(The Introduction section should flow right into this Scripture section, so continue speaking as though it was one continuous thought.)

We see this idea—that sin divides us from God—in a book written about the events in the life of a prophet named Isaiah where it says, “It’s your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore” (Isaiah 59:2). Our sin divides us from God. So let’s talk about sin.

(Alternatively or additionally, you can use these other verses here: Romans 3:10; Matthew 5:21–22, 27–28; Romans 6:23; 2 Timothy 2:22; Proverbs 28:13.)

BODY

- I. What is sin?
 - A. The original understanding of sin was “missing the mark.”
 1. The root words that we translate to sin (“hatah” in Hebrew and “hamartia” in Greek) can sometimes be understood to mean “to miss the mark.”
 2. Think of archers or shooters aiming for a target—specifically aiming for the center of the target. If they miss the mark, they are not doing it right.
 - B. We’re shooting for progress, not perfection, because no one is righteous (Romans 3:10).
 - C. There are different kinds of sin, so sin can be actions as well as thoughts.
 1. You can miss the mark by doing things God asks us not to do (think Ten Commandments) and by not doing things God asks us to do (think giving or



WEEK THREE

obeying the Holy Spirit's prompting).

2. You can also miss the mark by the way you think (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28).

D. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider giving an illustration about a time when sin or any other mistake prevented you from experiencing something good.)*

E. TRANSITION—One of the most basic things we know about sin is that God hates it. So the next question is: why does God hate sin?

II. Why does God hate sin?

A. God hates sin because it hurts us and separates us from Him (Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:2).

1. Some people think God hates sin and hates us because He is a grumpy dictator, upset that we broke His rules.

2. But Scripture tells a different story! As we heard last week—God is love and He loves us! He hates sin because it ultimately hurts us, not Him.

3. God also hates sin because it separates us from Him, and God is our Creator. He wants to be with us just like loving parents want to be with their children.

B. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider giving an illustration about a time when you were upset with a parent or leader who gave you some instruction that you didn't understand or want to obey at the time, but it turned out to be for your benefit or safety [e.g., "don't play with fire," "don't climb up there"].)*

C. TRANSITION—All of this information is useful, but it's not exactly practical. Let's move on from learning about sin to learning how to deal with sin.

III. How do we deal with sin?

A. The apostle Paul wrote to his friend Timothy about how to deal with sin and gave some really great advice: "Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts" (2 Timothy 2:22).

1. "Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts"—Don't just resist temptation, remove yourself from it.

2. "Instead, pursue righteous living"—Don't just remove the bad, replace it with the good.



3. “Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord”—Don’t do it alone, surround yourself with the right people. Surround yourself with the Church.
- B. Even after we’ve sinned, God has provided a plan of action for us to eliminate the division sin puts between us and Him.
1. “People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).
 2. Hiding our sin will always lead to greater consequences.
 3. However, we have access to God’s mercy when we confess (or admit) our sins and renounce (or repent of) our sins.
- C. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider giving an illustration of how repentance or confession has been a positive experience for you.)*
- D. TRANSITION—Those are the basics, but come back next week to learn more about the part Jesus plays in getting rid of the division between us and God that is caused by sin. Hopefully you know more about sin than you did when we started, but we haven’t really talked about the most important thing about sin.

CONCLUSION/ALTAR

Sin is serious. Sin is not something we can ignore, and it’s not something we can take lightly. Sin has the power to put division between us and the Creator of the universe, so it has some really serious power. Missing the mark that God has for our lives is something that everyone experiences at some point, but that doesn’t mean we can write it off as acceptable. There are things we can do to work against sin and be forgiven for our sin so that we are reconnected with God. We’re not looking for perfection, because all of us will always deal with sin, but we are looking for progress. I can’t get rid of sin from my life entirely, but I can get closer to hitting the mark today than I did yesterday.

Tonight, we’re going to take some time to talk to God about how we’ve been missing the mark. This is going to be a time where you can do business with God. If you often find yourself in situations where missing the mark is a temptation, you can ask God to help you have the strength to overcome those things. Paul suggested that we get ourselves out of those situations, replace the bad with the good, and to surround ourselves with the right people. These are incredible ways to help you focus on God and get closer to hitting the mark in your life.

Again, we’re all going to mess up. When we do, our reaction is extremely important.



WEEK THREE

God says that sin separates us from Him, but He also provides a way for us to get that closeness back. When we confess our sins to Him and ask for forgiveness, He loves us so much that He does it. He forgives us as many times as we ask for it. If you need to spend some time talking to God about how you've messed up and asking Him to forgive you, this is going to be the time to do that.

Our sin divides us from God, but with Jesus, forgiveness is always an ask away.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways does viewing sin as “missing the mark” change the way you think about it?
2. In what ways has sin created division between you and God? Between you and others?
3. What makes it difficult to admit your sins? Is there anything that makes it easier for you to admit your sins?
4. What are some ways to flee from the temptations and sins you deal with?
5. How have you experienced God's love through the forgiveness He offers when we ask for it?



Message Title:	Alive in 5: Jesus Paid for Our Sin, Then Came Back to Life
Primary Text:	Romans 5:6-11; 1 Peter 3:18
Purpose:	To communicate God's restorative plan for all of humanity.
Takeaways:	Jesus' death and Resurrection allows everyone the opportunity for new life. As a follower of Christ we can participate in Jesus' death and Resurrection through baptism and Communion.
Needs:	A list of statements for "Never Have I Ever." For the message, provide illustrations from your own life. Suggestions are given for the type of illustration to use, but the story/image/metaphor should be personal. Optional: Elements for Communion or items/equipment for water baptism.
Worship Suggestions:	Alive [CCLI #6605212] Resurrecting [CCLI #7051507] Forever (We Sing Hallelujah) [CCLI #7001228]

ICEBREAKER/GAME: NEVER HAVE I EVER

Have everyone stand up and then go through a list of simple statements starting with the phrase, "Never have I ever." If at any point in their life a student has done what you said they have to sit down. If a statement does not apply to a student, they do not have to sit down. Prepare a mix of fun options (i.e., "Never have I ever been out of the country") as well as serious options that touch on different forms of sin (i.e., "Never have I ever lied to get a sibling in trouble").

The goal of the game is to have everyone sitting down by the end to illustrate that everyone falls short in some way or another (referenced in point 1).



ALIVE IN 5: JESUS PAID FOR OUR SIN, THEN CAME BACK TO LIFE

by Rev. Blake Anthony

INTRODUCTION

This week in our *Alive in 5* series we are going to talk about how Jesus paid for our sin, then came back to life. The entire story of the Bible points toward a Savior paying the ultimate price—a price that we could never pay—in order to restore the relationship between God and all of humanity. God is a God of relationship and it is part of His nature. Even before He created anything He existed in a triune relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's no wonder that we were created to be in relationship with Him. After all, we are created in His image in order to reflect His nature!

(Give an illustration about the different types of relationships you have that reflect the relational nature of God.)

When sin entered the world and broke that relationship, it may have seemed like all was lost but God had a plan. He wasn't content with allowing His creation to remain broken. Let's take a look at this incredible plan of redemption.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 5:6-11: "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."

1 Peter 3:18: "Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit."



BODY

- I. Our sin had to be paid for to erase the division between us and God.
 - A. We know that our sin divides us from God—we talked about that last week.
 1. If we want to exist in relationship with God, our debt (sin) must be removed.
 2. If you owe a friend money, your relationship changes to lender and debtor. Your relationship can return to its natural state once the debt has been repaid.
 3. When we sin, it acts as a debt we owe God because God, being holy, cannot exist with sin.
 4. This may sound unfair but if you've ever been lied to or betrayed by someone, you understand how that can create separation in a relationship.
 - B. We are unable to pay the price.
 1. There is nothing we could do to remove the debt ourselves.
 2. The bar for perfection is set way too high for us ever to be able to reach it so God, in His love, sent someone who could.
 3. “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners” (Romans 5:6–8).
 - C. ILLUSTRATION—(*Reference the “Never Have I Ever” game. With the more serious examples, people sat down because we’ve all messed up at some point. Every single person has messed up in one way or another, which means every single person as fallen short of God’s glory.*)
 - D. TRANSITION—The only person who could reach that level of perfection is God Himself, so this is where we begin to see God’s plan unfold.
- II. Jesus’ death paid the price.
 - A. God longs to restore relationship with us.
 1. “Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God” (1 Peter 3:18).



WEEK FOUR

2. He makes a way for our sin to be removed without removing the ones who sinned. He destroys the infection without destroying the infected so that He can bring us safely home.

B. Sacrifice became the way to atone for sin.

1. In the Old Testament, animal sacrifice was used to atone for the sins of the people. God allowed for the animal's life to be a substitute. Priests would sprinkle the blood (which represented life) from the sacrifice around the temple to "cover" sin (which leads to death). However, animal sacrifice was only a temporary solution.
2. In the New Testament, Jesus came and gave Himself as a perfect sacrifice for us. He lived a sinless life, and through His sacrificial death became our substitute and His shedding of blood covered our sin forever!
3. "And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation" (Romans 5:9).

C. ILLUSTRATION—(*Consider giving an illustration about some ways we might try and pay the price ourselves.*)

D. TRANSITION—Jesus' death may have seemed like the end of the story, but if Jesus had remained in the grave, God's plan would've been incomplete. So not only did Jesus die on the Cross and pay the price for us, He conquered death by coming back to life.

III. Jesus conquered death by coming back to life.

A. By coming back to life Jesus broke the power of death and evil.

1. Jesus demonstrated God's perfect love for us by dying, but also demonstrated His perfect power by coming back to life.
2. If Jesus hadn't come back to life, the power of sin and death would still exist.
3. Through His death and new life, we also have hope for a new life!

B. When we accept Jesus into our hearts our relationship is restored.

1. "For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God" (Romans 5:10-11).



2. As followers of Christ we don't need to sacrifice animals anymore. However, we do get to participate in Jesus' death and Resurrection through baptism and Communion in order to recognize and remember His payment for us!
- C. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider partaking in Communion and even baptism if you have the time and resources available.)*
- D. TRANSITION—This is the ultimate plan, that through Jesus' sacrifice every person would have the opportunity for new life!

CONCLUSION/ALTAR

As we close tonight I want you to think about the relationships in your life that might need to be restored. Maybe it's your relationship with God. Maybe you have never taken the opportunity to repent and receive Christ. I would like to give everyone an opportunity to do that. Tonight could be the start of a new life for you. You don't need to worry about falling short because we have a Savior who loves us so much that He came and took the punishment that we deserved. Not only that, He then rose to life again so that we could be restored to our Heavenly Father! There are others who might be thinking of a relationship with a family member or a friend. Maybe they have wronged you or maybe you have wronged that person. The next step you need to take is to go to that person and forgive them just as Jesus has forgiven you. I want to encourage you that you can be confident in the finished work of Christ. You can live out your faith with boldness knowing that you have received an incredible gift. You have a brand new life in Him and you can invite others into that new life so they can be restored as well!

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What relationships in your life do you focus on the most? Why do you focus on those relationships?
2. In what ways have you tried to pay for your own sin(s)?
3. How was Jesus a perfect sacrifice? How does it feel knowing He came and took the punishment you and I deserved?
4. What are some ways you have seen God transform your life since you accepted Him in your heart?
5. How can you show people that your life is transformed? Think about your thoughts, words, and actions.



WEEK FIVE

- Message Title:** Alive in 5: We Need to Decide to Put Our Faith in God
- Primary Text:** Hebrews 11; Romans 10:9-10
- Purpose:** This message is designed to help students understand faith, the importance of having it, and how they can put their faith in God. This message leads to challenging students to examine their own heart belief and confess the lordship of Jesus.
- Takeaways:** Students will have a better understanding of faith and will have the opportunity to make their own faith decision.
- Needs:** Blindfolds, items to make a small obstacle course.
For the message, provide a personal illustration about a time when you made a life-changing or death-defying decision.
- Worship Suggestions:** Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me) [CCLI #5638022]
Do it Again [CCLI #7067555]
This I Believe (The Creed) [CCLI #7018338]

ICEBREAKER/GAME IDEA: WALK OF FAITH

From icebreakerideas.com:

- “1. Players are put into groups of three with the middle person blindfolded. The three players must stay in a line, in front and in back of the blindfolded person. The people in front and in back must guide the blind person through an obstacle course or through rooms in a house.
2. When the three players get back to where they started, the blindfolded player must follow the same path alone, trying to remember all of their turns and footsteps, while still blindfolded.
3. If the blindfolded player is successful and makes it to the end of the obstacle course, the team wins. If not, the players come back to the start, and another player is selected to be blindfolded with a player in the front and back; and they once again go through the obstacle course or rooms of a house.”

Source: https://icebreakerideas.com/youth-ministry-games/#nbspThe_Walk_of_Faith



ALIVE IN 5: WE NEED TO DECIDE TO PUT OUR FAITH IN GOD

by Rev. Kris Lewis

INTRODUCTION

(Note: This opening illustration is a story about making a death-defying decision, and is referenced back to later in the message. You can substitute your own illustration/introduction here as an alternative, just keep in mind this will affect the later illustrations as well.)

Growing up, I had been to our local water park many times. Every year our family would go at least once, our youth group would go another time, and my friends' families would bring me along too. You could say I was a pro. Every tube, slide, and pool was old news to me, except the Speed Slides. The skinny ones that seem to be at least three stories taller than any other slide with really short walls—in others words, the most terrifying and deadly ride ever invented. I never had the guts to ride one until the dare!

I was dating a girl in our youth group, and her brother dared me to go down the Speed Slide. I've never had the most impressive physical stature, but back then I was even skinnier. If I could do anything to make myself look tougher and stronger than I really was, I was going for it. So I took the dare!

It took me a little while to find the entrance to these insane slides, and then I had another 75 steps to climb in order to reach the top. I'm not sure if the air was thinner that high up or not, but it was definitely getting harder and harder to breathe. And of course, there was this buff macho guy standing at the entrance like a bodyguard for Aquaman. He looked at all 120 pounds of me as if to say, "Are you seriously going to do this?" Out loud he asked, "Which one do you want? The Freefall or the Speed Slide?"

I was thinking over this choice on my way up. The Freefall was 100 feet straight down to the ground, while the Speed Slide went down only 50 feet before having a bump in it, then going down again. As a skin and bones sophomore, I was afraid that I would fly off the Speed Slide and thought I had better chances on the Freefall.

The lifeguard at the entrance literally laughed when my junior high voice cracked, "FreEEEEfall . . . (a-hem) . . . Freefall please." Laughing, he pointed to his counterpart standing at the slides, "The runt wants the Freefall." His counterpart, a beautifully tan



WEEK FIVE

beach babe smiled back at him and waved me to come over.

Those last 5 feet to the slide's edge felt like walking through quicksand. I was aware of how stupid my arms felt as they swayed next to my sides, how white my legs were, and how terrified I was that this was going to be my last moment on earth, all to show how tough I was to my girlfriend's brother.

I kept thinking that this was the worst decision I had ever made in my life. I must have been totally out of my mind to have said yes to this dare! When I finally got to the edge of the slide and stepped into the icy water, I looked up at the lifeguard for instructions. Without looking back at me, she recited the instructions almost robotically: "Cross your arms and legs. Lay down, and don't sit up until it's time to exit the ride." I turned back to look over the edge of the slide and nearly chickened out right there. Then, looking towards the bottom, I saw my girlfriend and her brother, who was laughing his guts out. A few other friends from my youth group were also there, probably talking about whether I was going to back out or die trying.

In that moment I had a choice to make. Was I going to take the plunge and potentially fall to my doom? Or was I going to back out and run away? I want to talk to you about an equally challenging choice tonight. At the end of this message I am going to ask you something that is infinitely more important and life changing than going down the Speed Slides at the water park. Tonight is a night of decision.

TRANSITION—These last few weeks we have been presenting you with the basic concepts of the gospel: God is love; our sin divides us from God; and Jesus died for our sin and then came back to life. Tonight we will talk about what's next, and it all comes down to a critical point of decision. You have to decide how to respond to the gospel. Will you decide to take the plunge and put your faith in God? Or will you turn and walk away from the edge?

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 11:1: "Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see."

Hebrews 11:6: "And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him."

Romans 10:9-10: "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved."



BODY

I. What is faith?

(Note: Hebrews 11 has been called the “faith chapter.” There are many directions you can go with this. Consider using one of the Bible characters or stories mentioned in this chapter to help explain what faith is.)

A. Faith begins with hope, then develops into certainty.

1. “Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see” (Hebrews 11:1).
2. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider giving an illustration about a time you had to make a choice and put your faith in someone or something.)* I had faith that my odds were better on the Freefall slide than the Speed Slide, so I made the choice to put more trust in that one. I believed that if I was going to survive, this was the slide for me. If I didn’t have that simple hope—that faith—I wouldn’t have even approached the slide or taken the dare. Faith was the first thing I needed.

B. Faith is a key component in the life of a Christian.

1. You must have faith to move forward in your new life after salvation.
2. ILLUSTRATION—*(Consider picking your favorite Bible character or event from Hebrews 11 to illustrate how that person needed faith to overcome their situation.)*
3. Without faith, (name of Bible character) would not have been able to (insert action/accomplishment).

II. Why is faith important?

(Note: Here we want to impress why faith is important. Merely going through the motions is not what God requires. God wants us to deeply believe and trust in Him.)

A. Faith is our first step in the process of our salvation.

1. “And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).
2. “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that



WEEK FIVE

everyone who believes in [has faith in] him will not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

3. Faith is the one thing you must have in order to receive the gift of God’s grace and forgiveness for your sin. Without faith, you don’t have a shot. At the same time, faith is something that everyone can have which means God’s grace is available to all.

B. ILLUSTRATION—Did you know Dairy Queen gives away free sundaes to moms and dads on Mother’s Day and Father’s Day? All a parent has to do is show up with their kid(s) and they get an ice cream sundae, free of charge! They don’t have to pay for it but they do have to show up. Likewise, we don’t have to pay for salvation but we do have to have faith. Jesus paid the price! Salvation is ours for free, but we need to show up to receive it. Showing up means putting our faith in Jesus.

III. How do we put our faith in Jesus?

(Note: This point leads into the altar call. What is discussed in this point will be emphasized in the altar time.)

A. “If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved” (Romans 10:9-10).

B. Putting our faith in Jesus has inward and outward components.

1. “Inward” is what happens in your heart. You inwardly make the decision to put your full trust in Jesus. This is the starting point: the inner belief of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.
2. The inward belief must become an outward action. Scripture calls it “openly declaring.” This outward declaration is with our words and our actions. Your words and your actions should openly declare that Jesus is Lord!

C. TRANSITION—What we do and say should be in line with what we believe on the inside. This is a gutsy move.



CONCLUSION/ALTAR

(Be sure to leave adequate time for the altar; this is what the entire message has been building up to. Don't rush or force this moment but let it come naturally from your heart. Present the questions to your students and give them the opportunity to respond.)

At the start of this message I talked about the Freefall water slide. It took faith and guts to go down, but I did it! Now I'm asking you about your faith—not about a water slide, but about something far more important. I want to ask you a few things. Take a few moments to think about your answers, then we will respond.

- What do you believe about God? What do you believe about Jesus?
- Do you believe God is real? Do you believe Jesus is God's Son?
- Do you believe that Jesus's death on the Cross paid the price for our sin?
- Do you believe that Jesus came back to life three days later?

Now that you've thought about it, I want to give you an opportunity to respond.

If you answered "Yes" to those questions, then you have the faith you need to receive Jesus's gift of salvation. All that is left is to move from inward belief to outward action.

If you said "Yes" to those questions, then it's time to confess that Jesus is Lord.
(Personalize this in an appropriate way for your youth group. You can ask the students to stand and then call them forward or have them make a confession where they are. Challenge them to say out loud, "Jesus is Lord!" Pray together that their faith would increase.)

(As you close, be sure to pray with each student who has made a confession of faith. Have a plan to follow up with them later in the week. As you talk about next week, make sure to invite them back. Announce that you will be sharing about the Holy Spirit and the ways in which the Holy Spirit helps us to live for God.)



WEEK FIVE

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is the craziest thing that people believe? Why do you think people believe in weird and/or impossible things?
2. Do you think it's crazy to believe in God and Jesus? Why or why not?
3. What does it mean for us if everything we've heard about the gospel over the last few weeks is true? What, if anything, should it change?
4. What do you believe about God? What do you believe about Jesus?
5. In what ways has the gospel already changed you? In what ways do you want God to help you change even more?



Message Title:	Alive in 5: The Holy Spirit Will Help Us Live for God
Primary Text:	John 16:7
Purpose:	To introduce students to the Holy Spirit and His purpose in our lives as Christ followers.
Takeaways:	The Holy Spirit lives within us. He helps us live our lives in light of the decision we made to follow Jesus, and can do a better job than Jesus could if He never left earth.
Needs:	Table, one apron and blindfold per pair, sandwich ingredients. Optional: A wax seal or a picture of a wax seal.
Worship	Holy Spirit [CCLI #6087919]
Suggestions:	Here as in Heaven [CCLI #7051506] Spirit of the Living God [CCLI #23488]

ICEBREAKER/GAME IDEA: HELPING HANDS

(Use this earlier in the service if you like. It will be used in the message as an illustration. This can be a game to see who is the fastest, who makes the best sandwich, or it can just be used as an illustration.)

Two students of the same sex are needed. You can also do multiple pairs if you want to make it a more of a contest or competition. Set up a table with whatever sandwich ingredients you want laid out. Have the first student put on an apron (if you are worried about it getting messy), then place their hands behind their back. The second student, wearing the blindfold, stands closely behind and reaches their hands under the armpits and around the front of the first student, so that the second student's hands act as the hands for the first student. The second student must make the sandwich while staying in this position, while the first student keeps their hands behind their back. The student wearing the apron should explain how to make a sandwich, while the blindfolded student attempts to follow those directions.



ALIVE IN 5: THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL HELP US LIVE FOR GOD

by Rev. Thomas Tweedle

INTRODUCTION

Last week we talked about putting our faith into action—making a decision to trust in God and receive Jesus’ free gift of forgiveness. This week I want to tell you what it looks like to live a life that has been forgiven. We aren’t the same as we were before we knew Jesus, so how can we live our lives differently than we did before knowing Him? We still aren’t perfect. We still sin. What can make living differently possible? The answer is the Holy Spirit! He is our Helper.

Before we dive in and talk about who the Holy Spirit is, I think it is important to talk about what the Holy Spirit isn’t. Since we cannot see the Holy Spirit with our eyes, it can be easy to get confused. Some people have used words or ideas that make the Spirit seem like some sort of magical force. The Holy Spirit is described in the Bible as a powerful wind that we feel even though we do not see, but that doesn’t mean the Holy Spirit is a magical force. The Holy Spirit also isn’t a weapon or a tool; He’s not something we get hold of and use. We can experience the Holy Spirit, but ultimately the Holy Spirit is not about an experience or a feeling. And although the Holy Spirit can give us a stronger passion for God, we can’t assume that it’s the Holy Spirit doing something just because we sense more passion, energy, or excitement.

The Holy Spirit is a person with a mind, a will, and emotions. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit speaks and acts. He can be grieved. He can be resisted, ignored, and even sinned against. He comforts, counsels, and guides. The Holy Spirit helps us!

SCRIPTURE

Let’s see what Jesus had to say about the Holy Spirit. He says in John 16:7, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (ESV).

TRANSITION—Many times I hear people say, “It would be so much easier if Jesus was right here next to me.” Do any of you feel that way? Jesus actually did something far greater for



us by leaving and sending the Holy Spirit in His place. Let's look at some of the reasons as to why it is better to have the Holy Spirit with us.

BODY

- I. The Holy Spirit is greater than Jesus being on earth at this time.
 - A. When Jesus came to earth He came as a man, which meant He was somewhat restricted by time and space.
 1. He was a man who could only be in one place at one time. He did miracles, but couldn't be in multiple places at once.
 2. As the disciples traveled all over the world preaching the gospel, Jesus couldn't be with each of them. But the Holy Spirit could!
 - B. Jesus was God's presence in human form, but the Holy Spirit transcends human form.
 1. Jesus was God among us.
 2. The Holy Spirit is God within us.
 - C. Jesus often spoke to crowds and groups, while the Holy Spirit speaks directly to us.
 1. Jesus spoke in parables or stories, oftentimes to large groups.
 2. The Holy Spirit can speak specifically and explicitly to us about things happening right now.
 - D. Jesus was on a mission to save us from our sin. The Holy Spirit empowers each of us to live our lives in light of Jesus' mission, while also fulfilling our personal mission of sharing Jesus with others.
 - E. ILLUSTRATION—In the movie *Pinocchio*, Jiminy Cricket said, “Let your conscience be your guide.” A lot of people live this way, but Jesus sent the Holy Spirit so we can have a better way. Our conscience can be flawed and sinful, but the Holy Spirit is not. The Holy Spirit becomes our guide, and speaks to and influences our conscience wherever we go. The Spirit speaks and whispers to us, guiding us at every step and turn if we choose to listen to Him.
 - F. TRANSITION—You may be asking, “So where is this Holy Spirit dude?!” Let's talk about it!



WEEK SIX

II. The Holy Spirit resides in us.

A. The Holy Spirit is our seal and is deposited in us!

1. “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13–14, NIV).
2. “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21–22, NIV).

B. ILLUSTRATION—(*Consider showing a picture of a wax seal, or bring in an actual one.*) We used to know who a letter was legitimately from by the seal imprinted on the wax. People had a unique seal that they would press into the hot wax, declaring that it was theirs. The Holy Spirit is God pressing His mark upon us, declaring that we are God’s, and a declaration of the future inheritance we have in Him. We have been stamped for God. And that stamp is the Holy Spirit.

C. TRANSITION—So we know who the Holy Spirit is and where the Spirit is, but what does the Holy Spirit do?

III. The Holy Spirit points us to Jesus. (John 14:16–17)

A. The Holy Spirit is an advocate, but the Spirit isn’t the first advocate!

1. “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you” (John 14:16–17).
2. An advocate is a person who publicly supports a particular cause, or a person who pleads on someone else’s behalf.
3. Notice how this Scripture says “another Advocate.” Who is the first advocate?

B. Jesus is our first advocate.

1. Remember that Jesus died on our behalf? Jesus is our first advocate.
2. Jesus speaks to God the Father on our behalf. And He speaks not based on our own performance, but based on His performance.



3. The Holy Spirit speaks to us on God’s behalf. The Holy Spirit testifies and reminds us about what Jesus did for us, pointing to Him as our example, and reminding us of His great love for us.

C. TRANSITION—*(Note: The next point will lead into the conclusion and altar time. Consider having your worship band return at this time.)*

IV. We need help from the Holy Spirit.

A. We aren’t perfect, and the Holy Spirit helps us!

B. ILLUSTRATION—When someone first gets their driver’s license, are they the best driver they can be? No way! In the same way, when we first come to Christ, we aren’t the best we can be. We have tons of room for improvement. The Holy Spirit is personally here with us to help us as we walk on our new journey of following Christ.

C. “Helper” may not even be the best word to describe the Spirit because it may not be strong enough. Think about some ways in which we can experience help from others. *(Note: You can substitute your own illustration here by talking about someone you know personally. Contrast the Holy Spirit’s help versus the human help we receive.)*

1. My four-year-old nephew Jimmy “helps” his mom make cookies. In reality, a big mess might be made, cookies might get burned, raw dough might be eaten, and the whole process might take longer. The cookies may not be made right. *(Note: Reference the “Helping Hands” game.)* It’s a lot like the game we played earlier! There wasn’t actually much “help” going on there, right? The Holy Spirit is not that kind of helper.

2. When Jimmy was starting to walk, his mom would hold both of his hands up to help give him the balance he needed to walk. As he got better at walking, he needed less and less of her help, only needing one hand to keep his balance, and eventually no help at all. The Holy Spirit is not that kind of helper.

3. On the playground Jimmy runs around, goes down the slide, crawls over and under things. He has a blast, but there is one place he needs help: the monkey bars. Little kids have difficulty doing the monkey bars. Once they get on the first bar, all they can do is hang there because they can’t reach them. They don’t have the strength to let go, swing their free hand to grab the next bar, and swing their whole body forward. So when Jimmy comes up, he asks for help. I need to lift him up just to grab on to the bars. I need to hold most of his body



WEEK SIX

weight because if I let go, he's going to fall. I have to move him along the bars because he lacks the strength and coordination to do it on his own. It would be impossible for him to even try to do it on his own. You see, the Holy Spirit is that kind of helper!

- D. The Holy Spirit helps us do things that would be impossible under our own power.
1. He reminds us of what Jesus has done for us. (John 14:26)
 2. He gives us wisdom and knowledge. (1 Corinthians 2:13-15)
 3. He helps us pray. (Romans 8:26)
 4. He reminds us of what we have read in the Bible. (John 14:26)
 5. He guides and directs us to work with other imperfect people (like ourselves) to spread the good news about what Jesus has done, to live in harmony, and to love the world no matter what they think of us. (John 14:21-24; Galatians 5:16-24; 1 Corinthians 12)
 6. He gives us power to share the gospel with others. (Acts 1:8)

CONCLUSION/ALTAR

Most of the time, when we think of the word “helper,” we think of someone who makes our task lighter; perhaps making it easier for us or helping us to accomplish it more quickly. The truth is, the Holy Spirit does not make our task easier. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to accomplish it at all! The Holy Spirit makes the impossible possible!

It's not about me and my power. It's about God's power through me. The Holy Spirit is the one who convicted me of my sin and pointed me towards Jesus, so I am going to depend on His power! I don't have to know it all because I can be dependent on the Holy Spirit! The Spirit prepares me, helps me constantly, and continuously redirects my eyes towards Jesus. He helps me remember things I've read in the Bible or heard in church, and speaks through other people in my life to help me as I follow Jesus.

(Note: How you structure this altar time may depend on how long your students have known Jesus, how long they have been in church, etc. Additionally, we know the Holy Spirit works in different ways with different people. Some students will respond positively in regard to a group altar time. Others will hide what you said in their heart, and go home and seek the Holy Spirit alone. Remember, the Holy Spirit is a person, and you are encouraging your students to converse and interact with a part of the Trinity they may never have considered.)



- Encourage students to ask the Holy Spirit for help in following Christ. Have them ask Him to reveal things in their life that need attention.
- Have other adult leaders share experiences of when they felt the Holy Spirit guiding them to do something they wouldn't have done themselves (e.g., sharing the gospel, dealing with a conflict in a certain manner, doing anything different that resulted in a God moment with someone else, etc.)
- Offer altar time and ask individual leaders to be available to pray over students. Still encourage students to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself to them as they pray on their own.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of when you hear “the Holy Spirit?”
2. In what ways might we need help when it comes to being a follower of Jesus?
3. What is hard about following Jesus? Is there anything that's easy about following Jesus?
4. Is there anything you feel God is asking you to do? How are you going to respond?
5. In what ways do you need the Holy Spirit to guide and empower you?

(Consider taking turns praying and asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom, guidance, and help when it comes to specific situations individuals or the group are facing.)

