

# The Most Powerful Proof That Jesus Is Our Savior



## SABBATH—NOVEMBER 24

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** John 11:51, 52; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; Ephesians 4:25–5:2; Romans 14:1–6; Luke 22:24.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Caiphias did not think of these words himself. He spoke what God had said would [will] happen. He was telling [the Jews] before it [Jesus’ death] happened that Jesus must die for the nation. He must die not only for the nation, but also to bring together into one group the children of God who were living in many places” (John 11:51, 52, NLV).



**Jesus and the Bible are the center of our beliefs and message.**

**LAST WEEK,** we saw that God gave our church a message to share with everyone on earth. This message also shows our unity. Unity is agreement. As a church, we show we are in agreement when we join as one in heart, mind, and belief. Jesus and the Bible are the center of our beliefs and message. We are who we are because of this message.

This week, we will look at what it means for our church to experience unity in everyday life. Jesus told us that the church must do more than share God’s truth. The church itself also must live the truth. Then everyone on earth will see the saving work of Jesus and believe in His power. But if church members are not joined in agreement, then no one on this earth will see the saving power of the cross. “Our being joined as one in Jesus also joins us in agreement with each other. This agreement or unity is the most powerful proof of Jesus’ power to take away sin.” —Ellen G. White Comments [ideas], *The SDA Bible Commentary [explanation]*, volume 5, page 1148, adapted.

**UNDER THE CROSS OF JESUS (John 11:51, 52)**

God blesses His church with many gifts. One of these gifts is church unity. You will remember that unity is agreement. As a church, we show we are in agreement when we join together as one in heart, mind, and belief. Unity is not made by humans. Unity does not happen in the church because of anything good we do or by our own good behavior. Jesus gives us unity when we accept His death and forgiveness for our sins and are baptized. Then we join in Christian friendship with other believers to share the Three Angels' Messages with everyone on the earth. Our sharing this message helps make us one with God and joins us together as one family.

**John 11:51, 52 and Ephesians 1:7–10 tell us the reason for our unity as Seventh-day Adventists. What did Jesus do on this earth that joins us as one?**

“Caiaphas did not think of these words himself. He spoke what God had said would [will] happen. He [Caiaphas] was telling [the Jews] before it [Jesus' death] happened that Jesus must die for the nation. He must die not only for the nation, but also to bring together into one group the children of God who were living in many places” (John 11:51, 52, NLV). It seems strange that God used Caiaphas to explain the meaning of Jesus' death. Caiaphas did not understand what he did when he judged that Jesus should be put to death. Caiaphas did not understand why his words about Jesus really were true. But the Bible uses those words to show a deeper truth about how Jesus' death helped all of God's loyal people everywhere.

As Seventh-day Adventists, Jesus' death is why we can be in agreement. We start to experience this agreement when we believe in Jesus and get baptized (Galatians 3:26, 27). Baptism shows our faith in Jesus. Baptism helps connect us with other Adventists. Baptism also is a word picture for our faith in Jesus. We all have one Father in Heaven. We are all God's sons and daughters. We have the same Savior. We are baptized by faith. By faith when we are baptized, we join Jesus in His death and in His waking up from the dead.

**There may be many differences among us as Seventh-day Adventists. But why should our faith in Jesus be more powerful than anything that separates us?**



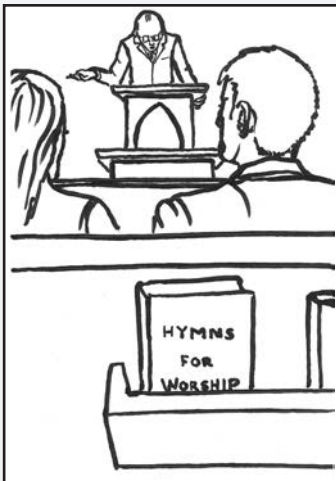
**Baptism is a word picture for our faith in Jesus. Baptism helps connect us with other Adventists.**

## JESUS' WORK TO BRING US BACK TO GOD (2 Corinthians 5:17–21)

Human history on Planet Earth is filled with wars and troubles. Sometimes, it seems that all the trouble and fighting will never end. But all disagreements and wars will not go on forever. God works with His people to end disagreements and fighting and to bring everything in heaven and on earth into unity. We learned that unity is agreement. God wants to join everyone in heaven and on earth in one heart, mind, and belief in Jesus.

In Ephesians 2:13–16, Paul talks about what Jesus did to bring peace to believers. Jesus died on the cross. His death made both Jews and non-Jews one people. Jesus' death broke the "walls" of race and religion that separated them. Jesus did that for both the Jews and the non-Jews in the first century A.D. [years 1–100]. Just think what He can do for us in our time! He can break any "wall" of race or way of life that separates people in our own church today. Then we can reach out to everyone on the earth with the truth that Jesus saves humans from their sins.

**In 2 Corinthians 5:17–21, Paul says that Jesus makes us new in Him and brings us back to God. How does this truth show us the work that God wants us to do for everyone on this earth? When we join as one in the truth, what difference can our church make in the lives of people?**



**When we join as one with each other in love and truth, then we show everyone in heaven and on earth that God's plan to save us is true and powerful.**

When Jesus makes us new, God gives us special work to do for Him. This work has three parts: (1) God wants us to invite people everywhere to come back to Him and join us in our work for Him. We, too, were separated from God. But the Holy Spirit joined us to God by our faith in Jesus' death for us. Now we belong to God's end-time people. He chose us to give His final message of warning to everyone on earth before Jesus comes back. (2) God wants His people to show everyone on the earth that Jesus is our Savior. How do we do that? Our joining as one in Jesus proves that He is our Savior. When we are joined as one with Jesus, then we also will be joined as one with other believers in Christian love (John 13:35). (3) When we join as one with each other in love and truth, then we show everyone in heaven and on earth that God's plan to save us is true and powerful. Then everyone in heaven and on earth will see that God's plan to save us is full of wisdom and love.

## A POWER FOR GOOD (Ephesians 4:25–5:2)

In 1902, Ellen G. White wrote, “Every Christian needs to be what Jesus was in His life on this earth. He is our example. He did not do any evil. He also was patient and gentle. His behavior won people’s love.”—*Signs of the Times*, July 16, 1902, adapted. These words help us remember Paul’s words in his letter to the Philippians: “In your lives you must think and act like [the same as] Jesus” (Philippians 2:5, ICB).

**Read Ephesians 4:25–5:2 and Colossians 3:1–17 and then answer these two questions: (1) In what parts of our lives can we show that we are loyal to Jesus? (2) How can we share the Good News about Jesus with the people that we see every day?**

Many verses in the Bible encourage Christians to follow Jesus’ example and show God’s mercy to other people. The Bible also asks us to do good to other people (Matthew 7:12); to help carry their heavy loads (Galatians 6:2); to live in a way that is spiritual, not empty (Matthew 16:24–26; 1 Peter 3:3, 4); and to be healthy (1 Corinthians 10:31).

“Dear friends, you are like [the same as] visitors and strangers in this world [on earth]. So I beg you to stay away from the evil things your bodies want to do. These things fight against your soul. People who do not believe are living all around you. They might [may] say that you are doing wrong. So live good lives. Then they will see the good things you do, and they will give glory to God on the day when Christ [Jesus] comes again” (1 Peter 2:11, 12, ICB). We often do not understand that our lives have the power to change the lives of people around us. When people around Jesus became upset or angry, Jesus always stayed calm and patient. Jesus never gave up or stopped doing His duty even when life got tough or hard. He was gentle when people around Him were mean and unkind. The Bible invites us to show to everyone the same spirit that Jesus showed to people who did not know God. Then we will become a power for good and for God’s glory. We also must show people that we care about them. When we as Seventh-day Adventists join as one in this work, then we will be powerful witnesses.

**How can you show Jesus to the people around you?**



**The Bible asks us to do good to other people (Matthew 7:12) and to help carry their heavy loads (Galatians 6:2).**

## JESUS JOINS US AS ONE EVEN WHEN WE HAVE DISAGREEMENTS (Romans 14:1–6)

In Romans 14 and 15, Paul talks about the problems that divided the church at Rome. Paul asks the Roman church members to be patient with each other and not to allow their disagreements to separate them. What can we learn from Paul's advice to the church at Rome?

**In Romans 14:1–6, Paul talks about some of the disagreements in the church at Rome. These disagreements caused members to judge each other. What were these disagreements?**

No doubt the problems in the church at Rome were about Jewish rules and laws. Paul's words in Romans 14:1 tell us that fighting over the answers to these problems was wrong. The answers to these problems were not important. They had nothing to do with anyone being saved. Paul felt that each believer should decide what God wanted him or her to do. But no one should force his or her beliefs or choices on anyone else.

These disagreements first started over eating food. Let us be very clear here. Paul is **not** talking about the clean and unclean food laws in Leviticus 11. There is no proof that the Christians in Paul's time started eating pork or other unclean animals. We also know that Peter did not eat unclean foods (read Acts 10:14). Paul is talking about some believers in the church at Rome who did not eat at fellowship meals. Maybe they felt the food at the meals was not cooked in the right way. Or maybe they refused to eat the food at fellowship meals because they thought that someone offered the food first to statues of false gods.

There also is a disagreement in the church about what to do on some days. We know that this disagreement has nothing to do with keeping the Sabbath holy. We know that Paul always kept the Sabbath holy (Acts 13:14; Acts 16:13; Acts 17:2). So, it seems that this disagreement is really about different Jewish feast days or days of eating no food at all. Paul wants believers to accept some differences and not try to force everyone to believe the same as they do. They already know that keeping the feast days will not save them. So, Paul feels it is OK to let people honor these days. What can we learn from this story? We must be patient and accepting with people, even when we do not agree with each other.



**No one should force his or her beliefs or choices on anyone else.**

## JESUS JOINS US AS ONE IN OUR WORK FOR GOD (Luke 22:24)

In Luke 22:24, we read about how Jesus' followers behaved and felt about each other at the Last Supper. In Acts 1:14 and Acts 2:1, 46, we read about how Jesus' followers behaved shortly before God poured His Spirit on them. What a big difference! What changed their lives?

The words written as “these [Jesus' followers] all agreed” in Acts 1:14 (NLV) and as “they all had the same purpose” in Acts 2:46 (ICB) also mean to “not give up, but to go forward with one mind.” Jesus' followers were all in agreement because they came together in one place to pray for God to send them the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus' followers waited, they did not blame or accuse each other of the mistakes they made in the past. No one told Peter he was an awful person because he turned away from Jesus (John 18:15–18; John 18:25–27). No one blamed Thomas for doubting that Jesus really woke up from the dead (John 20:25). No one blamed John and James for asking Jesus to give them more power and honor than anyone else in Jesus' kingdom (Mark 10:35–41). No one talked about how Matthew collected taxes in the past (Matthew 9:9).

Jesus' followers did not do any of those things. The friendships that they shared and their prayers helped get them ready for the Holy Spirit. They grew closer to God. They put aside their personal differences. The Holy Spirit helped them to become brave witnesses for Jesus. Jesus' followers knew that Jesus forgave their mistakes. His forgiveness helped them to feel brave to do God's work. Jesus' followers knew what Jesus had done for them in their lives. They trusted in the promise that Jesus saved them. “They wanted more than anything to show the love of Jesus to everyone on the earth. They also wanted to build up Jesus' kingdom.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles [leaders and teachers]*, page 48, adapted. No wonder the Lord used these people to do powerful things in His Name! What a wonderful lesson for us as a church today!

**It is always so easy to find something wrong with other people's lives. How can we learn to forgive the mistakes of other people so that we as a church can join as one in Jesus to do God's work?**



**Jesus' followers were all in agreement because they came together in one place to pray for God to send them the Holy Spirit.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Ellen G. White, “Unity [agreement] in Diversity [differences],” pages 98–103, in *Evangelism [sharing the truth about Jesus everywhere on the earth]*.

The Christian church in New Testament times was joined as one in Jesus. There were many differences in the church. But the church was a powerful witness to the people around it. So, how did the church stay together as one in Jesus? “The Bible shows us that the Holy Spirit guided the New Testament church in the decisions it made. The Spirit guided the church’s decisions in three ways: (1) the Spirit told people what to do. (Examples include the stories about Cornelius, Ananias, and Philip.) (2) the Holy Spirit guided the church to use the Bible to make decisions. And (3) the Holy Spirit led the church to come together and join as one to make big decisions about things. (The Holy Spirit led the church to discuss their problems together, study the Bible for answers, and then agree on the right decisions.) The Spirit brought the church together to discuss problems when they did not agree about Bible teachings and ways of life. These meetings show us that leaders and believers must agree to come together to discuss their problems and pray about them. These examples clearly show us that the Holy Spirit led the church.”—Denis Fortin, “The Holy Spirit and the Church,” in Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, editor, *Message, Mission [special work for God], and Unity [agreement] of [in] the Church*, pages 321, 322, adapted.



**“The Holy Spirit guided the church to use the Bible to make decisions.”**

—Denis Fortin, “The Holy Spirit and the Church,” in *Message, Mission [special work for God], and Unity [agreement] of [in] the Church*, pages 321, 322, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Is there anything that we believe and do as Seventh-day Adventists that other Seventh-day Adventists do not need to believe and do? If yes, what things are they? How do we, as a church, decide what teachings and ways of life we need to follow? How do we decide what teachings and ways of life we do not need to follow?
- ② As Christians, we believe in the death of Jesus and His Resurrection. Jesus’ Resurrection is the teaching that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and then woke up from the dead and came back to life. How can this belief help us make strong friendships with other Christians?