

Open Bible Stories — God's New Covenant

Introduction

Key Idea

The story of God's New Covenant teaches us that Jesus brings in the blessings of a new way of being restored to a relationship with God in the New Covenant.

Core Belief Verse

"Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant." Hebrews 9:15

God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife, and she bore twins Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from slavery.

God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people, who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil, and the kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning.

When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

Jesus performed many miracles: he fed a crowd of five thousand, he walked on water, he healed the sick, and he cast out demons.

He proclaimed to people the nature of real faith, God's kingdom, and how fallen humans can be restored in relationship with God.

Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus revealed his power and glory to his disciples.

He raised a dead man to life, Jesus was betrayed by one of his disciples and put on trial before a Roman governor.

Jesus was sentenced to death and crucified on a cross. Three days later, Jesus rose again from the dead.

After meeting with many of his disciples, Jesus went back to heaven. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers and formed them into his church. Jesus' disciples, like Peter and John, performed miracles and preached the good news about Jesus. New leaders like Stephen and Philip served the church and preached about Jesus. Even Saul, a persecutor of Jesus' followers, became a Christian and preached the gospel to many people. Jesus is the promised Messiah and brings in blessings of a New Covenant.

The Story: God's New Covenant

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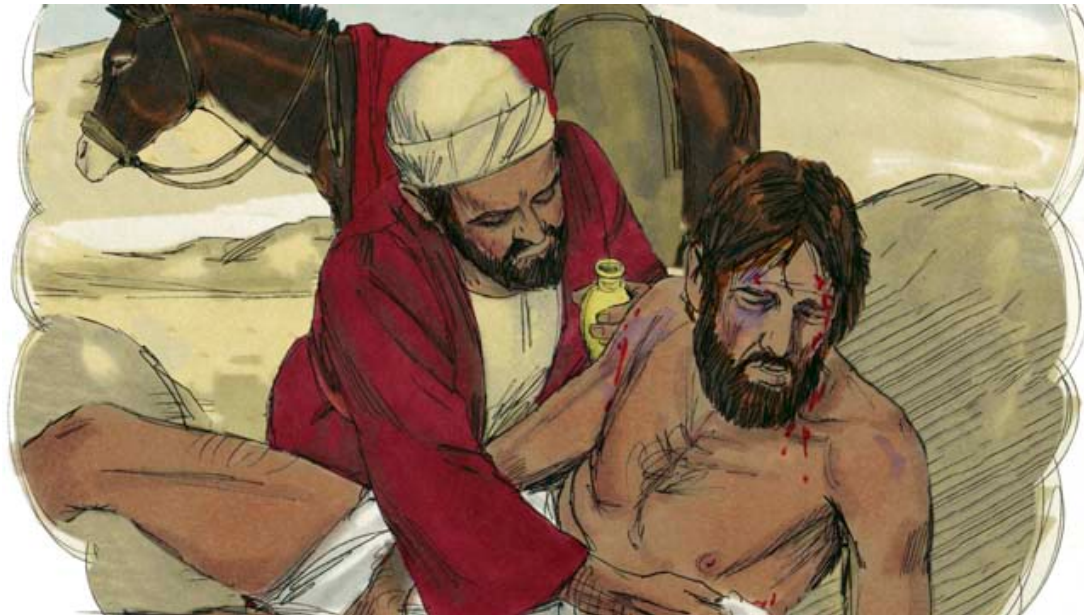
An angel told Mary, a young woman, that she would give birth to God's Son. She was still a virgin, but the Holy Spirit came to her and made her become pregnant. She gave birth to a son and named him Jesus. Therefore, Jesus is both God and human.

49-02



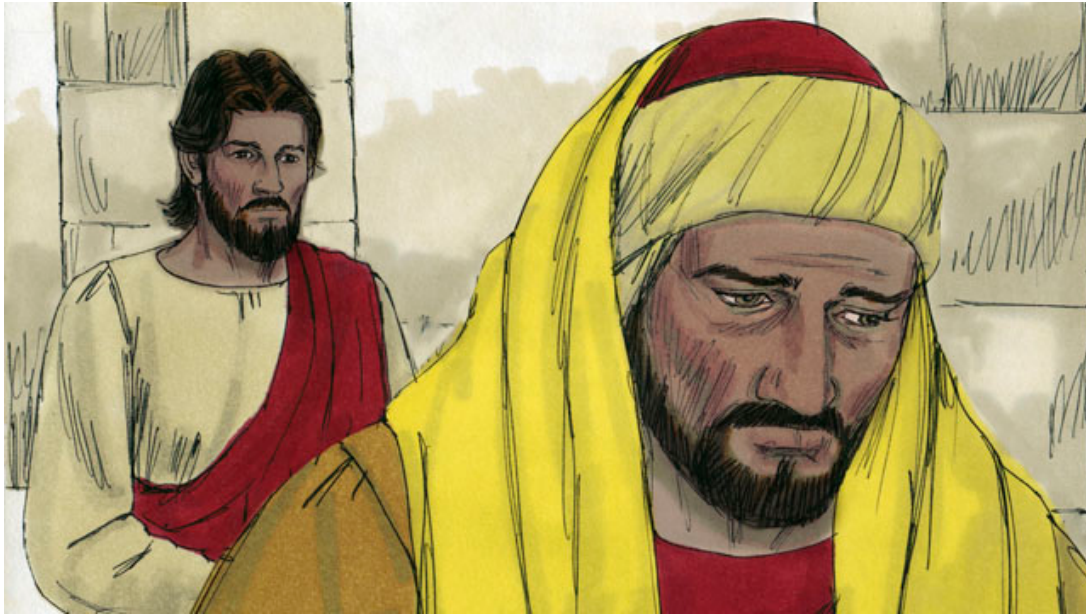
Jesus did many miracles that show that he is God. He walked on water and stopped storms. He healed many sick people and drove demons out of many others. He raised dead people to life and turned five loaves of bread and two small fish into enough food to feed over 5,000 people.

49-03



Jesus was also a great teacher. Everything he taught, he taught correctly. People should do what he told them to do because he is the Son of God. For example, he taught that you must love other people the same way you love yourself.

49-04



He also taught that you need to love God more than you love anything else, including your possessions.

49-05



Jesus said it is better to be in God's kingdom than have anything else in the world. God must save you from your sins in order for you to enter his kingdom.

49-06



Jesus said that some people will accept him. God will save these people. However, other people will not accept him. He also said that some people are like good soil. Because they accept the good news about Jesus, God saves them. However, other people are like the hard soil on a path. God's Word is like seed that falls on the path, but nothing grows there. These people reject the message about Jesus. They refuse to enter into his kingdom.

49-07



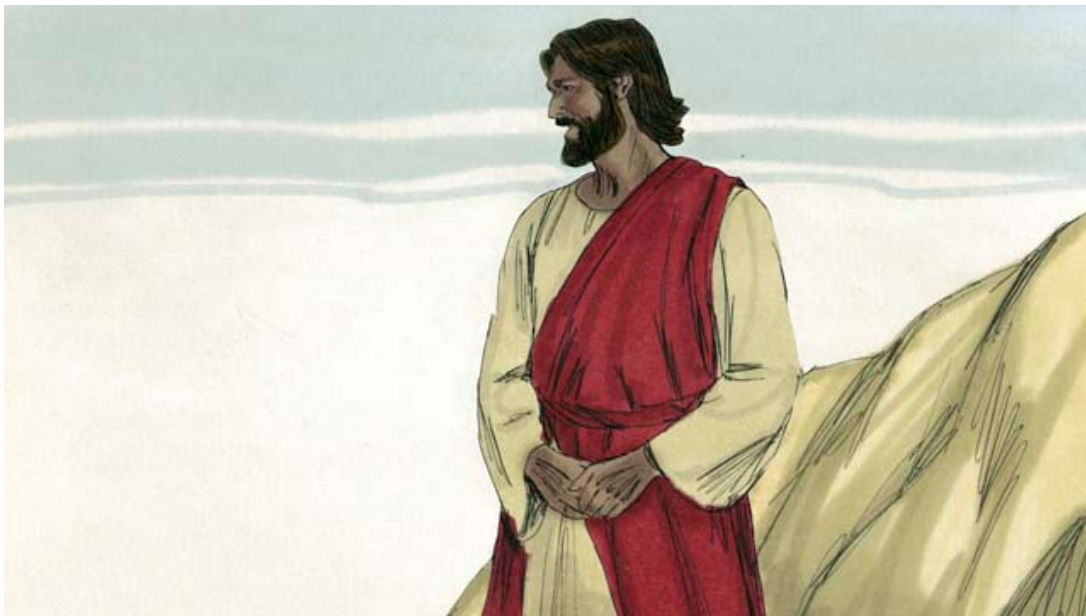
Jesus taught that God loves sinners very much. He wants to forgive them and to make them his children.

49-08



Jesus also told us that God hates sin. Because Adam and Eve sinned, all of their descendants also sin. Every person in the world sins and is far from God. Everyone is an enemy of God.

49-09



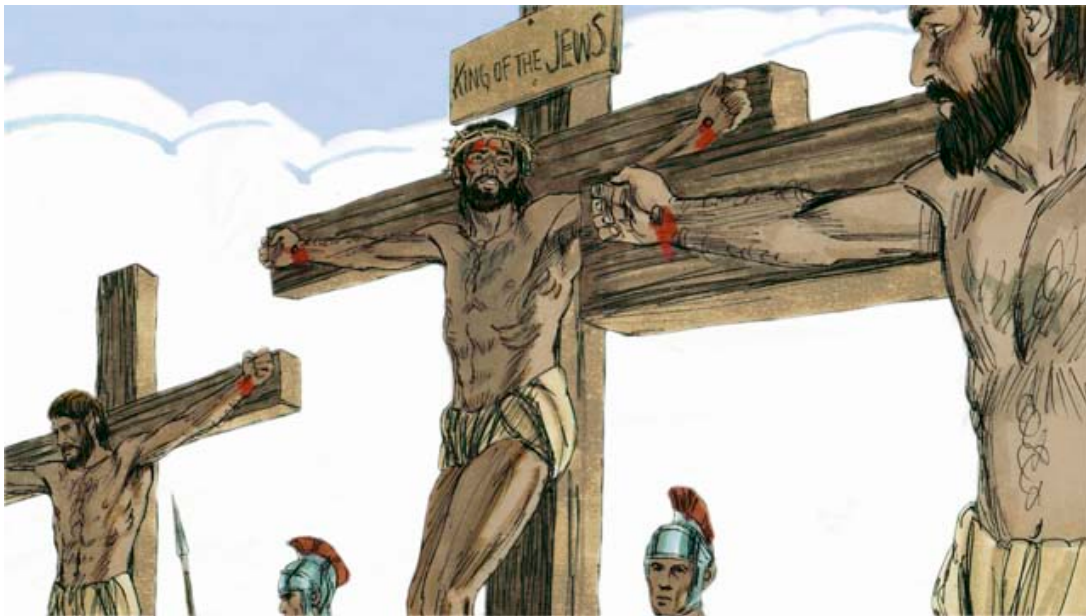
But God loved everyone in the world in this way: he gave his only Son so that God will not punish those who believe in Jesus. Instead, believers will live with him forever.

49-10



You deserve to die because you have sinned. It would be right for God to punish you, but Jesus took the punishment for sin in our place. God punished Jesus by killing him on a cross.

49-11



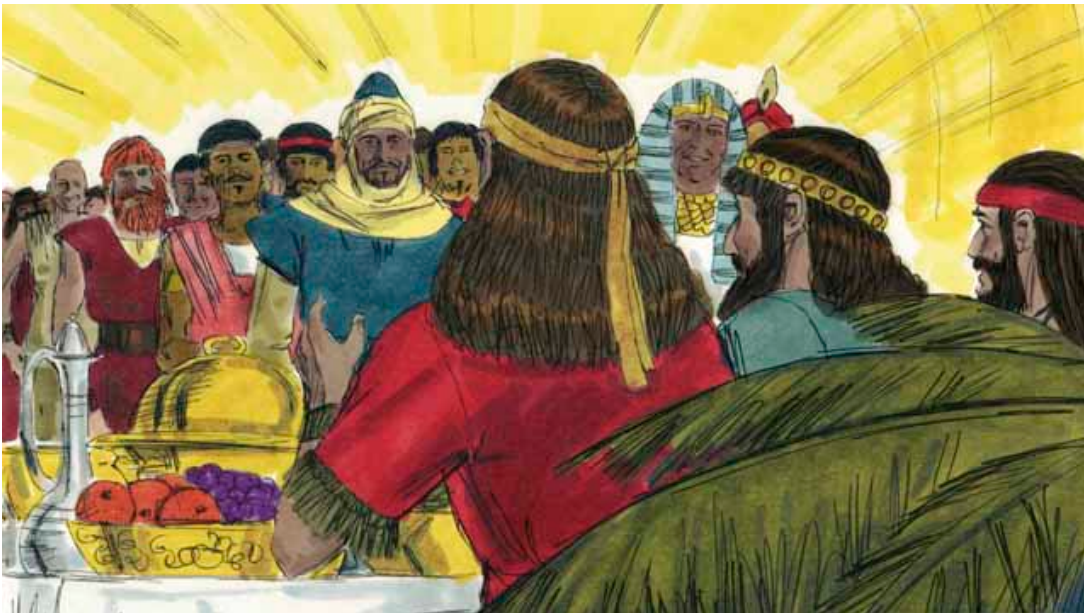
Jesus never sinned. He accepted the punishment for sin, including the worst possible death. In this way, he was the perfect sacrifice to take away your sins and the sins of every person in the world. Jesus sacrificed himself to God, so God will forgive any sin, even terrible sins, of the people who believe in Jesus.

49-12



Even if you do many very good things, this will not make God save you. There is nothing you can do on your own to become friends with him. Instead, you should believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the cross instead of you, and that God raised him to life again. If you believe this, God will forgive you for having sinned.

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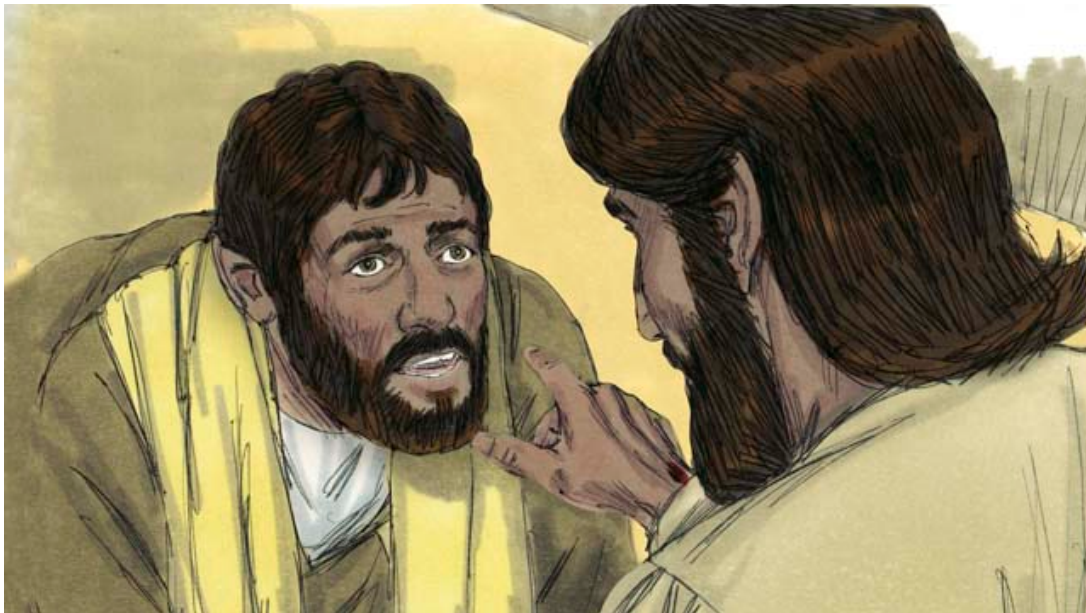
God will save everyone who believes in Jesus and accepts him as their Master. But he will not save those who do not believe in him. It does not matter if you are rich or poor, man or woman, old or young, or where you live. God loves you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can be a friend to you.

49-14



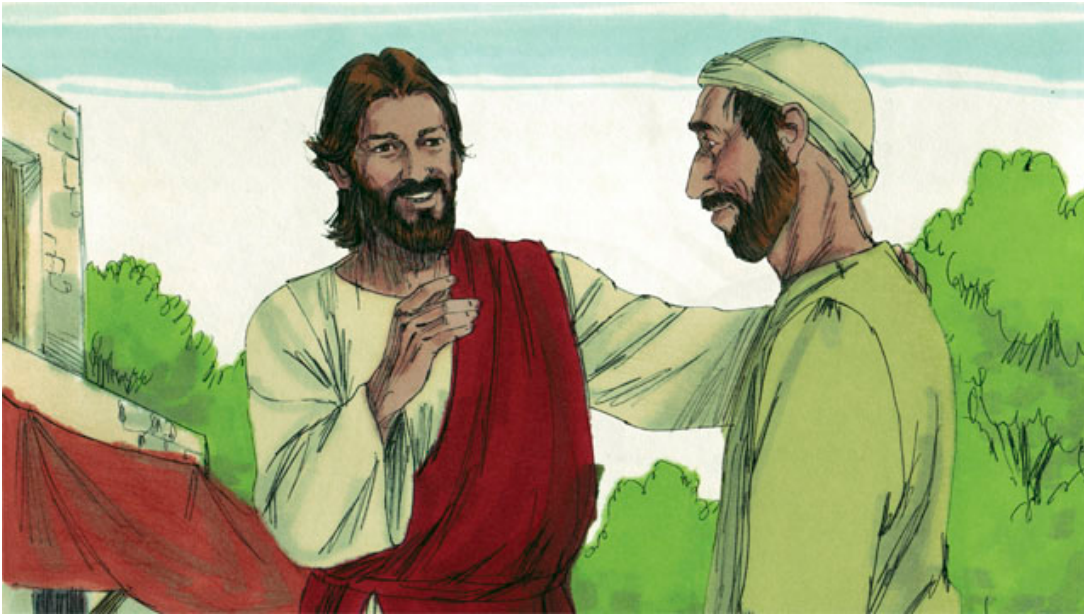
Jesus is calling you to believe in him and to be baptized. Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the only Son of God? Do you believe you are a sinner and deserve God's punishment for your sin? Do you believe Jesus died on the cross to take away your sins?

49-15



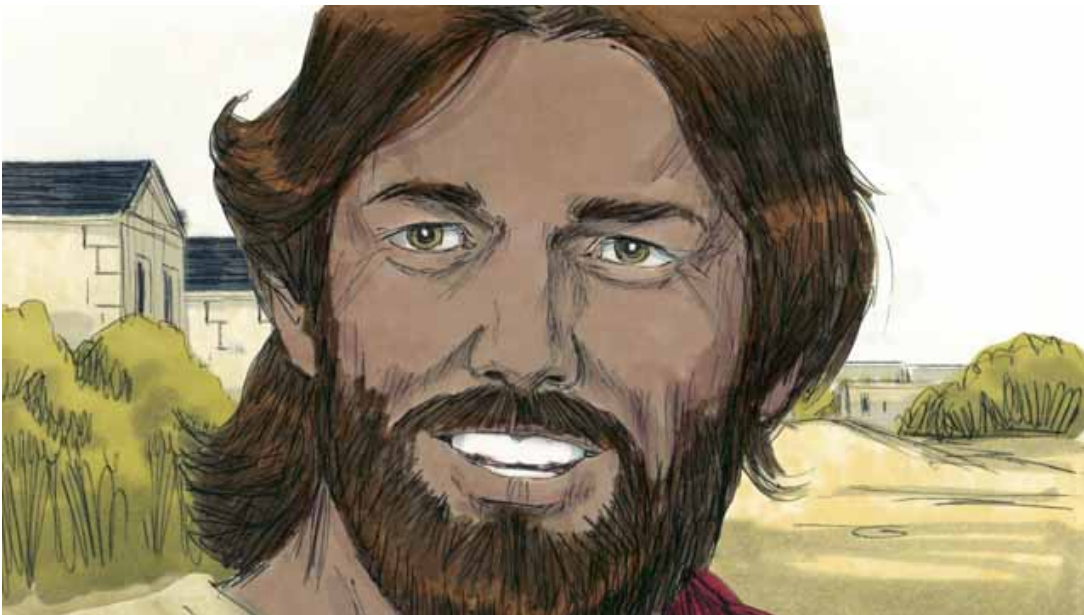
If you believe in Jesus and confess what he has done for you, you are a follower of Jesus! Satan no longer rules you in his kingdom of darkness. God is now ruling over you in his kingdom of light. God has enabled you to no longer sin as you used to do. He has given you a new, right way of living.

49-16



If you are a follower of Jesus, God has forgiven your sins because of what Jesus did. Now, God considers you to be a close friend instead of an enemy.

49-17



If you are a friend of God and a servant of Jesus, the Master, you will want to obey what Jesus teaches you. Even though you are a follower of Jesus, Satan will still tempt you to sin. But God always does what he says he will do. He says that if you confess your sins, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against sin.



God tells you to pray and to study his word. He also tells you to worship him together with other followers of Jesus. You must also tell other people what he has done for you. If you do all these things, you will become a strong friend of his.

A Bible story from: Genesis 3; Matthew 13-14; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 2; 10:25-37; 15; John 3:16; Romans 3:21-26, 5:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 John 1:5-10

Community Study: Community Thanksgiving—Expressing Gratitude to God

- **Key Idea:** giving thanks to God for his great work
- **Key Passage:** 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4
- **Main Session:** OBS 49 (God's New Covenant)

Recite the Core Belief Verse (3–5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

6 But now Christ has received a much better ministry, just as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which is based on better promises.
Hebrews 8:6

OR

9:1 I will give thanks to Yahweh with my whole heart; I will tell about all your marvelous deeds. Psalm 9:1

Remember Your Community Growth (5 minutes)

Think about the ways your community has grown in the faith and experienced God's goodness. Share these as a community.

These are some of the ways our community has grown and become strong in the faith...

These are some of the wonderful deeds God has done among us...

Read the Passage (3–5 minutes)

Christian community becomes strong as it expresses thanksgiving to God. When God's people are grateful, it makes the whole group of believers stronger. Read the passage below to learn about the important practice of thanksgiving.

3 We should always give thanks to God for you, brothers. For this is appropriate, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love each of you has for one another increases. 4 So we ourselves speak proudly about you among the churches of God. We talk about your patience and faith in all your persecutions. We talk about the afflictions that you endure. 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

Discuss the Passage (10-15 minutes)

There are many reasons to be thankful. God is a good God who sustains his people and uses hardship to grow them in their faith. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of the biblical passage.

1. How does Paul express thanksgiving in this passage? What does it mean to give thanks to God for other people?
2. How can believers be thankful through hardship? How does this passage teach about this?
3. What negative things might happen to your community if you do not practice thanksgiving?
4. How can your community develop a healthy practice of thanksgiving and gratitude?

Express Gratitude (5 minutes)

Think about the past months together as a community. Identify the hardships you endured, the people you appreciate, and reasons to be thankful to God. Share these together as a community.

When I think about the past months together, these are some of the hardships we endured...

When I think about the past months together, these are some of the people I am grateful for...

When I think about the past months together, these are some reasons I am thankful to God...

Pray to God (5 minutes)

As a whole community, use the sentences in the above activity to guide you in prayer. Offer these prayers aloud as a community.

Sing a Song (3–5 minutes)

Sing a song of thanksgiving to God. Praise him for his goodness to you and your community. Allow this song to encourage your community to endure hardship well.

Movement 1: Understand the Story

Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.

Observation Questions

49-01

Who gave birth to God's Son? Mary, a young woman who was a virgin, gave birth to God's Son, Jesus.

How did she become pregnant with Jesus? The Holy Spirit made her become pregnant with Jesus.

Is Jesus both God and human? Yes. Jesus is both fully God and fully human at the same time.

How is Jesus both God and human? Jesus became human because he was born of a woman. At the same time, he was and is God, and was born of a virgin made pregnant by an act of the Holy Spirit.

49-02

How did Jesus prove that he is God? He did many miracles.

What were some of the miracles Jesus did? Jesus walked on water, stopped storms, healed many sick people, drove out demons, raised dead people, and fed over 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two small fish.

49-03

What kind of teacher was Jesus? Jesus was a great teacher and everything Jesus taught was true/correct.

Why should people listen to Jesus' teaching? People should listen to what Jesus says because he is the Son of God.

What did Jesus teach about how we should love other people? We should love them in the same way as we love ourselves.

49-04

What did Jesus teach about who we should love more than anything else? We should love God more than anything else.

49-05

What is the most important thing for anyone? The most important thing is to belong to the kingdom of God.

Is there anything more important than being a part of God's kingdom? No. Nothing in the world is as good/important as being a part of God's kingdom.

How can people belong to the kingdom of God? God must save people from their sins in order for them to belong to God's kingdom.

49-06

How will people respond to Jesus? Some people are like good soil and accept Jesus; others are like hard soil on a path and reject Jesus.

What happens to the people that accept Jesus? God saves the people who accept Jesus.

What do people do when they reject the message about Jesus? They refuse to enter into his kingdom.

49-07

Does God care for sinners? Yes. God loves sinners very much.

What does God want to do for sinners? He wants to forgive them and make them his children.

49-08

What does God hate? He hates sin.

What happened because Adam and Eve sinned? Because Adam and Eve sinned, all people are sinners, all people are far from God, and all people are enemies of God.

49-09

Who does God love? God loves everyone in the world.

How did God show his love for people? God showed his love for people by allowing Jesus, God's Son, to be punished for human sin.

Who are the people God does not punish? God does not punish people who believe in Jesus.

How long will believers in Jesus live? People who believe in Jesus all live with God forever.

49-10

What do we deserve from God because of our sin? We deserve to die because we have sinned. It is right for God to punish people.

What did God do to Jesus when he died on the cross? God punished Jesus for the sins that people did.

How did God punish Jesus? God punished Jesus by killing him on a cross.

49-11

Why was Jesus' sacrifice able to take away the sins of every person in the world? Jesus could take away our sins because he never sinned and was the perfect sacrifice.

How much sin will God forgive? Jesus can forgive any sin of any person who believes in Jesus.

49-12

Will God save us if we do good things? No. God will not save us if we do good things.

Can we do anything to make ourselves friends with God? We can do nothing to become friends with God.

How can we become friends with God? We need to believe that Jesus is God's Son, that he died on the cross in our place, and that God brought Jesus back to life.

What happens if we believe this about Jesus? If we believe this, God will forgive all of our sins.

49-13

Who will God save? God will save everyone who believes in Jesus and accepts him as his Master.

Will God save those who do not believe in Jesus? No. God will not save those who do not believe in Jesus.

What kinds of people can become friends with God? Any person can become friends with God: rich or poor, man or woman, old or young, and people from all parts of the world.

Does God love you? Yes. God loves you.

How do people become friends with God? We become friends with God by believing in Jesus.

49-14

What is Jesus calling you to do? Jesus is calling you to believe in Jesus and be baptized.

What does Jesus want you to believe? Jesus wants you to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus is God's Son, that you are a sinner who deserves God's punishment, and that Jesus died on the cross to take away your sins.

49-15

What happens when you believe in Jesus? When you believe in Jesus, you become a follower of Jesus, Satan no longer rules over you, God rules over you, God enables you to no longer sin, and God gives you a new way to live.

49-16

If you are a follower of Jesus, are you still an enemy of God? No, you are now a close friend of God.

49-17

Who wants to obey Jesus' teaching? Servants of Jesus want to obey Jesus' teaching.

Are followers of Jesus still tempted to sin? Yes, they are tempted.

What should followers of Jesus do when they sin? They should confess their sins to God.

What does God promise to do if we confess our sins? He promises to forgive and give us strength to fight against sin. God always does what he says he will do.

49-18

What are some things that God tells followers of Jesus to do? He tells us to pray, study his word, worship him, and tell others about what he has done for us.

What will happen if followers of Jesus do these things? If followers of Jesus do these things, they will become strong followers of Jesus.

Movement 2: Theological Questions

What Does This Story Teach Us?

1. How did Jesus bring about the New Covenant (i.e., a new way of relating to God)? What does this story tell about all that Jesus did to make it possible to be at peace with God?
2. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? How does this story teach us about what it means to experience God's salvation and follow Jesus?
3. What are the benefits that come with God's salvation? How does this story teach us about the good things that followers of Jesus enjoy?

Movement 3: Live It Out

Personal Implications & Applications From The Story

Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.

1. What have you learned about who Jesus is and how he has come to save people?
2. Before believing in Jesus, how were you an enemy with God?
3. How did God bring you to become a follower of Jesus? How is God calling you to follow Jesus as your Savior and Master?
4. Think about this week. Where does "God's New Covenant" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of God's New Covenant teaches us that Jesus brings in the

blessings of a new way of being restored to a relationship with God in the New Covenant.

Movement 4: Retell the Story

Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.

1. Can someone retell "God's New Covenant" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

Church Ministry

Ministry Preparation: Identify a ministry setting in your church or community where this story could help people understand who Jesus is and how God restores people through the New Covenant. Pray and prepare to retell the story clearly.

Ministry Implementation: Retell "God's New Covenant" in that setting. Invite listeners to name what the story teaches about Jesus, salvation, and life with God.

Ministry Reflection: Afterward, discuss what listeners understood, what questions they asked, and how the story could be told more clearly next time.

Movement 5: Share It

Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.

1. Who is one specific person you will share "God's New Covenant" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

Mission Engagement

Witness Preparation: Identify one person or household outside the church who needs to hear the good news that Jesus restores people to God. Pray for them and practice telling the story simply.

Witness Implementation: Share "God's New Covenant" with that person or household. Explain the one main truth from the story and invite them to respond to Jesus.

Witness Reflection: After sharing, record what happened, what questions were asked, and how you will continue praying or following up.