**Adult Bible Study: Oh, To Love Like Christ!**

*A Study on Genesis 45:3-15, Psalm 103:1-13, 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42, and Luke 6:27-38*

**Opening Prayer**

**Heavenly Father, You have shown us through Your Word the depth of Your love—a love that forgives, restores, and raises up the lowly. As we study today, open our hearts to see Christ in the story of Joseph, in the teachings of Jesus, and in our own lives. Strengthen our faith, that we may trust in Your greater plan and be empowered to love as You have loved us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

**Introduction: The Ups and Downs of Life**

**"Can you think of a time in your life when you felt like everything was going well, only for things to suddenly take a turn for the worse? Or a time when something bad led to something unexpectedly good?"**

*(Give time for a few people to share.)*

Much like **Joseph’s life**, our lives often feel like a **roller coaster of ups and downs**. One day, everything seems to be going right; the next, we are struggling. But through it all, **God is working for our good**, even when we can’t see it in the moment.

In today’s study, we will explore how **Joseph’s story points to Jesus**, how the Bible repeatedly shows a **pattern of being cast down and raised up**, and how we are called to **love as Christ loves us**.

**Part 1: Joseph’s Story – Cast Down and Raised Up**

🔹 **Read Genesis 45:3-15.**

**1. How do Joseph’s words to his brothers reflect the love of Christ?**  
*Joseph forgives his brothers, even though they betrayed him. Instead of seeking revenge, he assures them that God was working through their actions for a greater purpose. This mirrors Christ’s forgiveness on the cross when He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

**2. Have you ever struggled to forgive someone who wronged you? What makes forgiveness difficult?**  
*(Encourage personal reflection. Answers may include pain, pride, fear, or the need for justice.)*

**3. How does Joseph’s story foreshadow Jesus?**  
*Both Joseph and Jesus were betrayed, suffered unjustly, and were ultimately raised up to save others. Joseph’s life is a “death and resurrection” story, pointing forward to the work of Christ.*

**Part 2: The "Cast Down and Raised Up" Pattern in Scripture**

🔹 **Read Psalm 103:1-13.**

**4. Verse 4 says, "He redeems your life from the pit." What does this mean for us?**  
*Throughout Scripture, the “pit” symbolizes despair, suffering, or even death. But God is the One who lifts us up, forgives our sins, and restores us to life.*

🔹 **Read 1 Corinthians 15:21-26.**

**5. How does Paul describe the ultimate "cast down and raised up" event?**  
*He explains that just as death came through Adam, resurrection comes through Christ. Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised on the third day—securing victory over death for all believers.*

🔹 **Read Jonah 2:1-6.**

**6. How does Jonah’s experience in the belly of the fish connect to this theme?**  
*Jonah was “buried” in the sea, in what seemed like certain death, yet God raised him up. Jesus Himself referenced Jonah as a sign of His own burial and resurrection (Matthew 12:40).*

**Part 3: Jesus’ Call to Love Like Him**

🔹 **Read Luke 6:27-38.**

**7. What is most challenging about Jesus' command to love our enemies?**  
*Answers will vary, but many may find it hard to love those who hurt them, to let go of resentment, or to trust that justice belongs to God.*

**8. How is forgiving others an act of dying to ourselves and rising with Christ?**  
*When we forgive, we let go of our pride, anger, and desire for revenge. This is a form of dying to our sinful nature and being raised to new life in Christ, who forgave us first.*

**9. What practical steps can we take to love and forgive as Jesus commands?**  
*Pray for those who have wronged us, show kindness even when it’s hard, and remember that we, too, have received undeserved mercy from God.*

**Conclusion: Living in the Pattern of Christ**

Joseph’s story, the Psalms, and Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians all point us to the **greatest act of being cast down and raised up—Jesus’ death and resurrection**. Just as Joseph was raised from the pit and forgave his brothers, so too does Christ **lift us up from sin and death, calling us to love as He has loved us**.

Ask the group: **"What is one way you can live out Christ-like love this week?"**

*(Encourage reflection and sharing.)*

**Closing Prayer**

**Gracious Father, You have redeemed our lives from the pit and raised us up in Christ. Thank You for Your mercy, Your forgiveness, and Your unfailing love. Strengthen us by Your Spirit to love our enemies, forgive as You have forgiven us, and trust in Your greater plan. Guide us in the week ahead to reflect the love of Christ in all we do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

**For Further Study and Devotion This Week**

**Suggested Daily Readings:**  
📖 **Monday:** Genesis 50:15-21 (*Joseph reaffirms forgiveness: "What you meant for evil, God meant for good."*)  
📖 **Tuesday:** Psalm 40:1-3 (*"He drew me up from the pit, set my feet upon a rock."*)  
📖 **Wednesday:** Isaiah 53:3-6 (*Christ, despised and rejected, bears our sins.*)  
📖 **Thursday:** Matthew 12:38-41 (*Jesus connects Jonah’s time in the fish to His resurrection.*)  
📖 **Friday:** Romans 6:3-11 (*Baptism unites us with Christ’s death and resurrection.*)

**Reflection Questions for the Week:**

1. Where do I see the “cast down and raised up” pattern in my own life?
2. How has God used past suffering to shape me for His purposes?
3. Who in my life do I need to forgive, even if they don’t deserve it?

**Final Thoughts**

This study follows the **Law and Gospel flow** of today’s sermon, helping us to see the **death and resurrection motif in Scripture**, reflect on **God’s greater plan in suffering**, and apply **Christ-like love and forgiveness** in our daily lives.