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New Testament

Deity of Jesus



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show that Jesus openly accepted worship as God.
- To study the scripture references that prove Jesus is equal to God.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Deuteronomy 6:5; Joshua 5:13-15; Mark 10:37, 13:32; Luke 4:8; John 9:38, 5:17, 21:17, Acts 14:8-20, Philippians 2:7



MEMORY VERSE

John 8:58: “I tell you the truth,’ Jesus answered, ‘before Abraham was born, I am!”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

The New Testament Gospels describe Jesus and His teachings in great detail. They help us gain an accurate picture of the Lord. This is important for us because Jesus said, “... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father ...” (John 14:9). Nobody has ever seen God with their human eyes. So the only way we can understand God is by learning more about Jesus. Over the following weeks, we will do a brief study of the different aspects of Jesus’ life and teachings.



ATTENTION GETTER

Story: Worship of Paul and Barnabas

(Based on Acts 14:8-20)

Note to Facilitator

The Student Workbook contains story-pictures.

- Before narrating the story, you could probably ask the children to guess at the story-line, based solely on the pictures in the Workbook. Some of the children may be able to guess part of the storyline on their own.
- Doing this will help get the children’s attention.

God provided Paul and Barnabas with an opportunity to share the Gospel in Lystra. In that city there was a man who couldn’t walk. He had been crippled since the day of his birth. He heard Paul talking, and Paul, looking him in the eye, saw that he was ripe for God’s work, ready to believe. So he said, loud enough for everyone to hear, “Up on your feet!” The man was up in a flash—jumped up and walked around as if he had been walking all his life.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they went wild, calling out

in their Lyconian dialect, “The gods have come down! These men are gods!” They called Barnabas “Zeus” and Paul “Hermes” (since Paul did most of the speaking). The priest of the local Zeus shrine got up a parade—bulls and banners and people lined right up to the gates, ready for the ritual of sacrifice.

When Barnabas and Paul finally realised what was going on, they tore their clothes in horror and ran to the crowd. Waving their arms, they interrupted the parade, calling out, “What do you think you’re doing! We’re not gods! We are men just like you, and we’re here to bring you the truth, to persuade you to abandon these silly god-superstitions and embrace God Himself, the living God. We don’t make God; he makes us, and all of this—the sky, earth, sea, and everything in them.”

Talking fast and hard in this way, they prevented the people from carrying out the sacrifice that would have honored them as gods—but just barely. The Lystrans were so impressed with the miracle that it took a lot of convincing before they would believe Paul and Barnabas were mere humans.

Unfortunately, a few days later, some Jews from Antioch and Iconium caught up with them and turned the fickle crowd against them. They beat Paul unconscious, dragged him outside the town and left him for dead. But as the disciples gathered around him, he came to his senses and got up. He went back into town and the next day left with Barnabas for Derbe.



TEACHING CONTENT

Three Reasons Why We Believe Jesus is Equal to God

Reason 1: Jesus Accepted Worship

In the Bible we see some instances where people tried to worship a man of God or an angel. However, in such cases,

the concerned person or holy angel immediately ordered the people not to worship them. This is because right in the beginning God made it very clear that nobody deserves worship except God Himself.

- **Luke 4:8:** “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”
- **Revelation 19:10:** “At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony to Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.’”

Jesus, on the other hand, never stopped anybody who bowed down and worshipped Him. For instance, in John Chapter 9, Jesus healed a man who was blind from birth. When this person bowed down and worshipped Him, Jesus did not stop him.

- **John 9:38:** “Then the man said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him.”

Reason 2: Jesus Claimed Equality by Calling Himself Son of God

In John Chapter 5, Jesus healed a paralytic at the Bethesda Pool on the Sabbath day. The jealous Jewish leaders accused Him of breaking the Sabbath rules.

Jesus answered them by saying that His Father worked even on the Sabbath, and therefore He too had every right to work on the Sabbath. Jesus identified Himself as God’s Son when He referred to God as His father.

- **John 5:17:** In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.”

The religious leaders understood Jesus’ words to mean that Jesus was equating Himself with God. A father and his son are equal—their roles may be different but their status is the same.

Reason 3: Attributes of Jesus Prove He is Equal to God

(Taken from www.middletonbiblechurch.org)

Below are listed some of the attributes of God. MATCH the verses which show that Jesus possessed these divine attributes:

- | | | |
|----------|---|---------------------|
| 1. _____ | Omniscient (knowing all things) | A. 1 John 2:1 |
| 2. _____ | Omnipresent (always present and everywhere present) | B. John 6:64 |
| 3. _____ | Omnipotent (almighty and all-powerful) | C. Micah 5:2 |
| 4. _____ | Eternal | D. Luke 1:35 |
| 5. _____ | Unchangeable | E. Matthew 28:20 |
| 6. _____ | Holy | F. Revelation 19:11 |
| 7. _____ | Righteous | G. Hebrews 13:8 |
| 8. _____ | Faithful | H. Revelation 1:8 |



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

We studied that God’s people and his angels never accepted worship for themselves, but always directed it towards God. This being the case, how do we understand the following verse?

Joshua 5:13-15: “Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, ‘Are you for us or for our enemies?’ ‘Neither,’ he replied, ‘but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ Then Joshua fell face-down to the ground in reverence, and asked him, ‘What message does my Lord have for his servant?’ The

commander of the LORD's army replied, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so."

This commander asked Joshua to take off his sandals. This is similar to Moses' experience at the burning bush when God asked Moses to remove his sandals.

So the man that Joshua talked with was equal to God. This leads us to the conclusion that this man was probably Jesus Himself.

Therefore, it was alright for Joshua to bow down and worship this commander.

Why do you think the Jewish leaders were so upset when Jesus called Himself the Son of God? Don't we all call ourselves sons and daughters of God?

The religious leaders understood Jesus' words to mean that Jesus was equating Himself with God. A father and his son are equal—their roles may be different but their status is the same.

For instance, in olden times, the people were expected to show equal respect to both the king and the crown-prince. Though the roles and position of the king and crown-prince differed, they were equally royal in status. In the same way, Jesus was declaring to the leaders that both the Father and He are equally God.

However, when you and I call ourselves God's children, we basically refer to our position of adoption into God's family. We are God's children only because the Lord took pity on us and provided us with a Savior who made it possible for us to enter His family.

John 1:12: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God ..."

So when we call ourselves God's children, we are not implying that we're God. Jesus on the other hand, clearly made this claim for Himself; and this angered the leaders.

John 21:17: Peter said, "... Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Mark 13:32: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Based on these verses should we believe that Jesus is all-knowing or should we conclude that He is limited in His powers?

Peter was aware that Jesus is fully-God. So he knew that just like the Father, Jesus too is all-knowing. Therefore he said to Jesus, "Lord, You know all things." Jesus did NOT deny his words nor respond, "No Peter, you're mistaken."

However, Hebrews 2:9 explains that for a little while, Jesus chose to make Himself a human being, lower than the angels. During this earthly phase of His life, Jesus allowed the Father to withhold information from Him ... because Jesus was trying to be as human and unknowing as all of us humans.

So Jesus deliberately chose to empty Himself of total-knowledge for a temporary period of time.

Philippians.2:7: "... but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."



APPLICATION

As we can see, Jesus has the same abilities and powers that the Father does. He is equal to the Father in status.

In spite of having such a high status, Jesus chose to empty Himself, and become as weak and helpless as us. Therefore, He deserves our Supreme Love.

According to Matthew 10:37, we are to love the Lord Jesus ... (Circle the correct answer).

- a. less than
- b. as much as
- c. more than

... those in our family who are closest to us.

According to Deuteronomy 6:5 what is Supreme Love?

This is the kind of love—the level of love—that we are expected to show the Lord Jesus!

Reflect on some practical ways that you can express your Supreme Love to the Lord this week.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



New Testament

Humanity of Jesus



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Jesus chose to become fully human for our sake.
- To explain why Jesus can help us in every circumstance and situation.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Hebrews 2:9, 14, 4:15-16; 1 Timothy 1:15; Matthew 26:31-40, 27:41-46; Mark 6:3; John 1:11-12 (Son of Man)



MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 2:14: “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why were the Jewish leaders so upset when Jesus called Himself the Son of God?
- Name some Attributes of Jesus that prove He is Equal to God.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

The New Testament Gospels describe Jesus and His teachings in great detail. They help us gain an accurate picture of the Lord. This is important for us because Jesus said, "... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father ..." (John 14:9). Nobody has ever seen God with their human eyes. So the only way we can understand God is by studying Jesus. Over the following weeks, we will do a brief study of the different aspects of Jesus' life and teaching.



ATTENTION GETTER

The Man Christ Jesus

(Taken from www.middletonbiblechurch.org)

Ask the children to complete the activity in the Workbook. The human attributes of Jesus are described in the given table.

Explain

Around forty years after Jesus' resurrection, a false teaching began to go about that Jesus had never really been completely human. According to the false teachers, He was just a spirit who 'looked' human, but was never completely human.

However the Bible declares that Jesus was really and completely human in every way:

- Jesus had a real physical birth. He went through a real birth process (Luke 2:7; Galatians 4:4).
- Jesus had real ancestors. The Bible gives us two genealogies of Jesus (Matthew 1; Luke 3).
- Jesus grew up (Luke 2:52). He grew physically, socially, mentally and spiritually. As an infant, He had to learn to walk, to talk, to read, etc.
- Jesus had a real physical, flesh and blood body (John 1:14). He knew what it was like to be hungry (Matthew 4:2). He knew what it was like to get tired (John 4:6). He knew what it was like to sleep (Mark 4:38). He knew what it was like to suffer and to feel pain.
- Jesus was part of a real family. He had a mother and a human father (Luke 2:48), four half-brothers and at least two half-sisters (Mark 6:3).
- Jesus had a job or an occupation. He is called “the carpenter” (Mark 6:3). No doubt He was trained by His father (Matthew 13:55).
- Jesus was tempted (Hebrews 4:15), yet He was totally “without sin.” In every temptation, He was victorious.



TEACHING CONTENT

(Taken from www.middletonbiblechurch.org)

Why Did God Come in the Flesh?

The Bible clearly reveals why Jesus Christ came into the world: “Christ Jesus came into the world to S_____ S_____” (1 Timothy 1:15). To save sinners, Christ had to die for sinners!

But GOD CANNOT DIE! God is eternal. God lives forever!
God is not subject to death (He is immortal-

1 Timothy 1:17). Therefore, in order to die, God had to become a man.

- **Hebrews 2:9:** “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”
- **Hebrews 2:14:** “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.”

God Knows and Cares

Because Christ became a man, No one can ever look up into heaven and say:

“God, You do not know what it is like to be a man. You do not know what I am going through and the problems that I am facing right now. You do not know what it is like to be in my shoes. You do not know, and You do not care.”

This is something that can never be said! The God who is in heaven has walked on this earth as a man. He knows what we go through because He has been here on earth. He faced almost every situation that we may face in life.

Hebrews 4:15: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”

How God Knows and Cares

Our hearts cry out for a God who can feel what we feel and experience what we experience! For God to do this, He had to become as helplessly human as all of us ... and He was willing to do it!

Example

God never goes to sleep! (Psalms 121:4) He is eternally awake and alert and “on the job twenty-four hours a day!” And yet, even though

God cannot sleep, God never gets tired, worn out or weary. God never needs to stop and rest. In Isaiah 40:28 we are told that the Creator-God “fainteth not, neither is weary.”

- So God had to become human, so that He could experience tiredness fully.

When God became a man, what did He do (Matthew 8:24)?

When God became a man, what are we told about Him (John 4:6)?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Christ knows just what we go through. To show you this truth, please do the following MATCHING problem:

1.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to suffer.	A.	Matthew 26:31,37,38,40
2.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to be unnoticed and rejected.	B.	Matthew 27:41-43
3.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to be called names.	C.	Matthew 27:46
4.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to be mocked and made fun of.	D.	Mark 6:3
5.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to have loved ones who do not believe.	E.	John 1:11-12

6.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to stand at the grave side of a loved one.	F.	John 7:5
7.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to toil and work hard with His hands.	G.	John 8:48
8.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to be betrayed by close friends.	H.	John chapter 11
9.	_____	Jesus knows what it is like to be alone, deserted even by his dearest companions.	I.	John 13:18 (Psalm 41:9)
10.	_____	Jesus knows the awful separation that sin brings. Even though He Himself never sinned, He did experience this separation.	J.	1 Peter 3:18

Jesus was never overloaded with studies. Do you think He really understands how you feel? Can He help? How?

It's true that Jesus didn't face the pressure of studies that we face today. But He did experience a worse kind of pressure.

When parents ask us to study tough subjects and get good marks, sometimes we're just plain lazy about doing it. However sometimes we genuinely want to try, but find the pressure unbearable.

We know that our parents are asking us to study for our own good. But we find the subjects so impossible to handle! Sometimes we feel like we'll burst if they make us study one more day!

In situations like this, we feel so 'Helpless'! We want to escape, but there's nowhere to escape to. The challenge must be faced! And we just don't have the strength or the intelligence to face it!

Does Jesus understand how this feels? Yes He does! Can Jesus help? Yes He can!

Jesus' Father asked Him to do something unbearable too! He asked Jesus to let Himself be crucified on the cross, bearing our dirty sins on His pure and holy shoulders!

Jesus knew his Father was asking Him to do a good thing. But in spite of knowing this, Jesus felt horrified about doing it. He knew that if He took our sins on His shoulders, He would be cut off from the Father, because the Father cannot tolerate sin. Jesus had never been separated from the Father in all of eternity, and He didn't feel He could bear it!

When faced with the pressure of studies, we sometimes feel like we'll burst. Jesus felt the pressure so much that his blood capillaries actually burst, and He began to sweat drops of blood!

However, in spite of facing such great pressure, Jesus decided to obey His Father. Seeing His obedient attitude, God then sent angels to Jesus, to minister to Him and prepare Him for the crucifixion.

So the answer is a big YES! God knows what it feels like when we are under great pressure. And yes, He knows how to minister to us and help us during those times. He may even send invisible angels to stand around our study table and assist us, as we study those difficult subjects.

This is why Hebrews 4:15-16 says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Jesus knows how you feel in every situation of life. And Jesus knows how to help.



APPLICATION

Here's a question to think about:

- Was there once a time when Jesus Christ was the very same age you are right now?
- Suppose you are twelve years old. Does He know what it is like to be a twelve year old?

Jesus knows and He WILL help! So go to Him confidently with your needs this week.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



New Testament

Jesus Said 'I Am'



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To stress the importance of hearing the Good Shepherd's Voice.
- To show how the Light of the World can improve our lives.
- To teach in what way Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

John 8:12, 10:27-28, 11:25-26; Luke 12:13-21 (I AM Sayings of Jesus)



MEMORY VERSE

John 8:12: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Can Jesus understand how a twelve year old feels? What makes you think that?
- This week, how did Jesus help you with your needs? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

The New Testament Gospels describe Jesus and His teachings in great detail. They help us gain an accurate picture of the Lord. This is important for us because Jesus said, "... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father ..." (John 14:9). Nobody has ever seen God with their human eyes. So the only way we can understand God is by studying Jesus. Today, we will take a look at what Jesus said about Himself.

Note to Facilitator

This session dwells briefly on the I AM sayings of Christ:

Primary Level:

- I Am the Bread of Life
- I Am the Gate

Junior Level:

- I Am the Good Shepherd
- I Am the Light of the World
- I Am the Resurrection and the Life

Senior Level:

- I Am the Way, Truth and Life
- I Am the Vine

**ATTENTION GETTER****Voice of the Good Shepherd**

The Student Workbook contains a maze for the children to solve. Explain the activity as follows:

In the Maze, we see a sheep that is eager to go to the shepherd. However it hears two voices calling out to it.

- One voice is that of the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd wants to take the sheep back to His flock, so that He can look after it and give it an abundant life.
- The other voice belongs to the butcher. He hopes that the sheep will come to him, so that he can kill it and sell its meat.

Help the sheep find its way to the Good Shepherd, without falling into the hands of the butcher.

Explain

Just like the Good Shepherd in the maze, Jesus too is calling to us. He wants us to follow Him all the days of our lives, so that He can meet our needs and help us experience an abundant life.

John 10:27-28: “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

But sometimes, just like the sheep in the Maze, we hear other voices ... voices which misguide us and cause us harm.

So it is very important that we grow familiar with the Good Shepherd's voice. We must study the Word of God daily, so that God can begin

speaking to us in our hearts. The more familiar we become with God's voice, the more difficult it will be for Satan to mislead us.

A few years from now, you will enter your teen-years and face many pressures:

- You will have to decide which optional subjects to choose at school.
- You will wonder whether the advice your friends are giving is good or not.
- You will have questions on your mind that only God can answer satisfactorily.

At that time, you will LONG to hear God's voice clearly, so that you can avoid making a mistake. But if you haven't taught yourself to hear God's voice from a young age, you'll find it difficult to develop this ability overnight ... and you'll probably end up listening to the wrong voice and make serious mistakes.

Avoid all of this, by spending time with God right from this young age! Meditate on God's Word daily and become familiar with your Shepherd's voice. He will then guide you every step of the way.



TEACHING CONTENT

Jesus—The Light of the World

Jesus called Himself not only the Good Shepherd, but also the Light of the World.

John 8:12: “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

We'll now briefly look at what Jesus meant when He called Himself this.

Ask

At night why do we switch on the lights at home? Why don't we simply live in the darkness until the next morning?

- What are the advantages of having light?

(Ask the children for their opinions.)

Explain

Without light, we feel 'blinded':

- We can't see the dangers (I may trip over something and injure myself badly).
- We can't see our mistakes and rectify them (I may not be able to see the baby putting his finger into a live socket).
- We can't enjoy many of the things that we were created to enjoy (I may be unable to enjoy the beautiful flowers on the table because it's too dark to see).

People without Jesus live this way. They live 'blinded' lives:

- With no Shepherd to guide them, they end up taking harmful decisions and hurt themselves in a hundred ways.
- Without the Holy Spirit's correction, they fail to rectify their defects, and fail to enjoy an abundant life.
- Their darkened minds are unable to see the world through God's eyes; and so their minds are filled with negative things that kill their joy.

How Jesus lights up our Lives:

- When we invite Jesus into our lives, He begins to throw light on all the hidden dangers. (For instance we may have spoken lies our whole lives. But after the Light of the World enters our hearts, He begins to show us how our lying exposes us to Satan, leading to all kinds of danger).

- When we invite Jesus into our lives, He throws light on our many defects. (For instance I may have always accepted my short-temperedness as a part of my personality. But now I see it as a ‘defect’, and even as he helps me overcome this defect, I begin to enjoy the sweet fruit of improved relationships).
- When we invite Jesus into our lives, we begin to see things differently—challenges look smaller when we look through God’s eyes, and suddenly we begin to walk in much greater victory.

The Light of the World brings light into our lives, wiping away all the darkness of fear, failure, pain and selfishness.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Read Aloud

(The children can take turns reading one verse each.)

Luke 12:13-21: “Someone in the crowd said to him, ‘Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.’ Jesus replied, ‘Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?’ Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.’ And he told them this parable: The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’ And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty

of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

What is the main learning that we gain from this Bible passage?

When we are rich in worldly things, it may benefit us for a 100 years (if we get to live that long). But if we are rich in the things of God, then we'll benefit not just on earth but in heaven as well.

Because the rich fool in the parable had spent all his life focusing on earthly things, and had ignored God, he had nothing left after death.

John 11:25-26: "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'"

If the rich fool had "believed in Jesus" how would it have changed his life?

If he had followed Jesus, maybe he wouldn't have grown as rich as he did—because a lot of his time and energy would have been focused on serving God and serving people.

But because of his faith in Jesus, he would have at least made it to heaven and enjoyed God's presence forevermore.

Jesus narrated the Parable of the Rich Fool when a man asked Jesus' help in dividing property. Do you think it was 'wrong' for the man to seek Jesus' help in this property—matter?

When we go to Jesus for help, we go to the One who is the Good Shepherd, the Light of the World, and the Resurrection and Life. So Jesus gave this particular individual the help that he “Most Needed”.

- As the Good Shepherd, Jesus saw this lost sheep heading down the pathway to hell. So He warned the man to guard himself against greed, and to start gathering spiritual riches.
- As the Light of the World, Jesus exposed the defect inside the man’s heart. The man probably hadn’t realised earlier that his greed for wealth was taking him away from God.
- As the Resurrection and the Life, Jesus wanted to make sure that this man would have a chance to live even after he died.

So Jesus may not always give us what we want. But He makes sure that we receive the BEST:

- The Good Shepherd provides his sheep with the ‘best’ pastures.
- The Light of the World doesn’t want us to live dark, depressing lives.
- The Resurrection and the Life doesn’t want us to have defeat, death and decay in our lives.

Therefore the Lord will always grant us the very BEST.



APPLICATION

How familiar are you with the Good Shepherd's Voice? When you are filled with doubt or fear, do you hear His reassuring voice guiding you?

The more time you spend meditating on God's Word, the greater the chances of becoming acquainted with His still small voice! So make a commitment to spend enough time mediating on the Scriptures daily.

Do you sense the Spirit specifically pointing out any defects or weaknesses?

Even as He exposes your defects with His holy light, humble yourself and admit that you have sinned. Choose to repent and change yourself in those areas.

Similarly are there any attractions or distractions that are taking you farther and farther away from God?

Give up your right to them (even if they are good, wonderful things). Or else you may drift completely away from the Lord!

This week allow the Light of the World to work in your life and start a transformation process.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



New Testament



Character of Jesus



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach on the compassion of Christ.
- To show how fearlessness and time spent with God are connected.
- To emphasise the importance of discipline in our walk with God.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Matthew 14; Matthew 8:24, 17:27; John 15:7-8; Ephesians 3:17-19



MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 14:14: “When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.”

Materials Needed:

Large sheet of paper

A pair of scissors



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why is it important for us to hear the Good Shepherd's Voice clearly?
- How does Jesus light up our Lives?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

The New Testament Gospels describe Jesus and His teachings in great detail. They help us gain an accurate picture of the Lord. This is important for us because Jesus said, "... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father ..." (John 14:9). Nobody has ever seen God with their human eyes. So the only way we can understand God is by studying Jesus. Today we will take a brief look at some key aspects of Christ's character, and see how we can emulate Him in our own lives.

Note to Facilitator

This session dwells briefly on different aspects of Christ's Character:

Primary Level:

- While on earth, Jesus was **Forgiving**
- He was Meek and Lowly
- He was **Obedient**

Junior Level:

- While on earth, Jesus was Compassionate
- He was **Disciplined**
- He was **Fearless**

Senior Level:

- While on earth, Jesus was **Pure and Holy**
- He was **Selfless**
- He was **Zealous**

**ATTENTION GETTER****Activity: God's Love**

(Taken from [Children's Sermons](#))

Show everyone a large sheet of paper with GOD'S LOVE written on it. Explain that God's love is something we can all have and we can also all give away. Point out that in this case God's love has "4 corners" Ask, If I were to give you one of my corners of God's Love how many would I have left? Some will surely answer 3. Then show them. Take the scissors and cut off one of the corners, and give it to someone. Count the corners now. "I gave one away, and now I've got FIVE!" Continue in this way, cutting off each of the four initial corners. Explain that you end up with MORE corners of God's Love every time you give one away. Then ask who received one of the corners I gave away. "Are you sure I gave you one?" It became three when you cut it ... so it keeps multiplying. **Keep on going and you get a circle—God's love encircling us!**

Explain

In the same way, the more of God's Love you give away, the bigger it gets ..."

Discuss

Ask the children to give for examples of how Jesus portrayed love in His life as revealed in the scriptures.



TEACHING CONTENT

Bible Story: Matthew Chapter 14

The Student Workbook contains story-pictures.

- Before narrating the story, you could probably ask the children to guess at the story-line, based solely on the pictures in the Workbook. Some of the children may be able to guess part of the storyline on their own.
- Doing this will help get the children's attention.

Jesus' Cousin Killed

During Jesus' times, the Romans had appointed Herod as king over the Israelites. Herod neither loved God nor obeyed Him. John the Baptist warned Herod and his wife, Herodias, to give up their sinful ways and repent. This upset Herodias very much as she did not like being corrected. That day onwards, Herodias carried a grudge in her heart against John. It was shortly after this that Herodias put pressure on her husband to have John killed. As a result, John's head was cut off.

John the Baptist was a cousin of Jesus. Because their mothers shared a deep bond of friendship, and visited each other often, John the Baptist and Jesus must have known each other quite well. Moreover both John and Jesus had a deep love and commitment for the things of God from an early age. So they must have spent much time together discussing the Scriptures and encouraging one another in the faith. When Jesus heard how cruelly this dearest cousin of His had been killed, He must have felt a lot of sorrow!

Jesus Sets Aside His Own Grief to Minister to Others

So after hearing the terrible news, Jesus went away alone by Himself to a deserted place (Matthew 14:13). He probably wanted to spend time with His Heavenly Father, expressing His pain to God and receiving comfort from Him.

But the people were desperate to meet Jesus. Some of them were heavy-hearted and longed to hear His rich words of hope; others wanted to be healed. So they started searching for Jesus until someone found Him. Immediately word went out about where Jesus was located, and the crowds started arriving. Five thousand men descended upon the place, many with their wives and little ones.

When Jesus saw the crowds gathering, He didn't get irritated and say, "Leave me alone because I'm in great pain. I need some quiet time to myself." Instead, His heart was moved with compassion. He felt sorry to see the sick and hurting people, and He began to minister to them. Even though there was pain in His own heart, He set aside His own need and instead worked towards relieving the pain of others.

Jesus Feeds the Crowd Though He is Tired from Grief and Hard Work

In the evening, after an entire day of teaching and healing, Jesus must have been so tired! The disciples asked Him to send away the people and take some rest. But Jesus was still so full of love and compassion towards the crowds! He said, "If we send the people away so late in the evening on empty stomachs, it would not be right. So let's feed them." Then Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fishes, to feed the crowd. By the time the crowds ate and the grounds were cleared up, it was night time.

Jesus Spends Time in Prayer

After collecting the leftover food, Jesus 'constrained' the disciples to take a boat and sail to the other side (Matthew 14:22). The Bible specifically uses the word 'constrained' which means that Jesus had to 'force' the disciples to sail. Some of them were experienced fishermen, and so they could sense a storm coming up. They were afraid to sail, but Jesus made them do it anyway.

After sending the disciples away, Jesus went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Jesus was very disciplined. Even though He was

tired, He didn't choose to rest in the boat with the disciples; instead He spent the whole night awake, praying and talking to God.

Disciples Mistake Jesus for a Ghost

By early morning, the disciples were in the middle of the storm which they had feared so much. Even as they struggled to maintain control over the boat, they saw someone walking on the water towards them. They assumed it was a ghost because normal people can't walk on water. This terrified them even more than the storm had terrified them! However Jesus called out to them, assuring them that it was Him.

Peter Walks on Water

Peter was fascinated to see the Lord doing something as impossible as walking on water. He immediately asked Jesus to help him walk on the water too. Jesus said, "Come" and Peter stepped out of the boat. He confidently began to walk towards Jesus on the water; but suddenly he noticed the strong winds and the waves around him. The minute he saw these, he got very scared, and the fear made him sink into the water. Peter desperately cried out for help, and Jesus caught his hand at once. Pulling him up out of the water Jesus said, "You of little faith! Why did you doubt?"

Jesus then helped Peter into the boat, and immediately the winds died down and the storm stopped. All of this was too much for the disciples to handle! First, they had seen Jesus multiplying five little loaves of bread to feed five thousand men, and their wives, and their children. Then they had seen Him walking on the water. And now they saw the storm stop suddenly. Seeing the Godhood in Him so clearly, they dropped to their knees in worship saying, "Truly you are the Son of God" (Matthew 14:32).

There are some basic foundational truths contained in this story. If you can grasp these truths and apply them to your lives, your future will be transformed forever! We will discuss some of these truths now.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

After hearing about the murder of His cousin, John the Baptist, Jesus withdrew to a deserted place. Why do you think He did that?

When something very painful happens to us, we don't feel like talking much. We prefer to be either alone by ourselves, or maybe with a few close people. We don't feel like being out in the crowd laughing and chatting as usual. Jesus must have felt the same way ... especially because His cousin had been killed so brutally.

If Jesus wanted to be alone for a little while, why do you think He didn't ask the crowds to leave?

Jesus is 'compassionate.' 'Compassion' is love, but it is more than just a feeling of love towards a needy person. It's a feeling that moves your heart so deeply that you 'do' something for the person in need. Maybe you could call it an 'action love'. It's a love that you put into action.

So, even though Jesus was in pain, He chose to relieve the pain of others. He didn't just feel sorry for the people; He 'acted' on the feeling and spent an entire day serving them! That's true compassion!

Why do you think Jesus spent the entire night praying, after having such a tiring day? Is it compulsory to spend time with God every single day?

There is no Bible verse in the New Testament making it 'compulsory' for us to spend time with God. However Jesus did say, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:7-8).

We spend time with God for our own personal benefit. The more we get to know the Lord, the more we become like Him. Then, we become fruitful and successful in every area of our lives; and He is able to answer all our prayers.

Jesus disciplined Himself to spend time with God even when He was tired, because He realised He 'needed' it. As a human being, He needed the love and strengthening that can come from the Father alone. So He never allowed other things to interfere with His time with the Lord.

The disciples were so afraid to 'sail' in the storm that Jesus had to force them. On the other hand, Jesus' response to the storm was to calmly 'walk' on the water! Why do you think the disciples were so scared, while Jesus wasn't scared at all?

People generally assume that Jesus was not scared of anything because He was God and nothing could hurt Him. They refuse to believe the Biblical truth that Jesus became completely human in every way. This means, He too got hurt just like everyone else. Just like everyone else, He too probably hammered His thumb once in a while, when doing His carpentry work.

The reason Jesus didn't feel afraid of the storm is because He knew His Father very, very intimately. Because He disciplined Himself and spent so much time with God, He knew just how deeply the Father loved Him. And because He was aware of this love, He knew the Father would protect Him from the storm.

The disciples, on the other hand, felt fear because they were not too sure whether God would help them. They were not that confident about God's love because they didn't know much about His love. And the reason they were not that much aware of His love is because they hadn't spent enough time with God.

When we spend enough time with God, we begin to discover the length and breadth, height and depth of God's love for us. This revelation

of God's love makes us as fearless as Jesus. Nothing will frighten us anymore because we know we are totally secure in God's love.

Ephesians 3:17-19: "... And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Why do you think Peter began to drown in the water after walking a bit? Why couldn't he continue walking just like before?

When Peter looked at the wild winds and waves, he got scared. Fear blocks God's power. Fear says, "I don't think God loves me enough to take care of me." Peter was walking on the water by the power of God. But when he allowed fear to take over, the power of God was blocked and he began to drown.

Why was Jesus upset with Peter when he got scared? Isn't it natural to feel afraid of drowning?

Jesus said to Peter, "You of little faith! Why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). Jesus was upset that Peter doubted His love for him. When you love somebody so much that you are willing to die for them, and in spite of that if the other person refuses to trust you, this can be very upsetting.

Jesus was in a way saying, "I came all the way to the earth just to sacrifice My life for you, and you think I would let you drown and die? Is that how little you trust My love for you?"



APPLICATION

Let us summarise what we have learnt today:

Jesus is Compassionate

When Jesus sees you hurting or suffering from some

problem, He feels “moved with compassion.” He feels an ‘action love’—the kind that makes Him want to do miracles to help you. In the Bible, every time Jesus was moved with compassion, He did a miracle to help the person in need.

However, miracles cannot happen for you if fear or doubts block God’s power from working in your life. And the fear and doubts will leave only if you have spent enough time with God, receiving a divine revelation of his love.

Jesus Was Fearless While On the Earth

Nothing scared Jesus when He was on the earth.

- When a storm was raging on one occasion, Jesus slept peacefully in the boat because He knew His Father would take care of Him (Matthew 8:24).
- When He didn’t have money to pay taxes, He didn’t feel scared because He knew His Father would miraculously provide the money (Matthew 17:27).
- He didn’t feel scared when powerful and influential people turned against Him, because He knew His Father would protect Him.

Jesus Was Disciplined in Spending Time With God

Jesus felt no fear because He knew God very intimately. He had spent so much time in God’s presence that He knew the length and breadth of God’s love for Him. The revelation of this love gave Him the confidence to face everything without fear.

If you want to be as fearless as Jesus, you must discipline yourself and spend as much time in God’s presence. If you do that, you will receive a deeper and deeper revelation of God’s love and compassion for you. This revelation will make you trust God to an extent where His power will flow unblocked through your life.

Note: The only time Jesus probably felt scared was in the Garden of Gethsemane—because in the Garden He realised that when He took the world’s sins on Himself, the Father would abandon Him for a while. Being separated from God scared Him. This was the only time Jesus felt horrified!

Because we are hardened in our hearts, we don’t feel horrified at the thought of being away from God. We don’t feel horrified at the thought of not spending time with Him and soaking up His love. But a revelation of God’s love, through regular time spent with the Lord, can melt away this hardness of heart.

Begin to apply these truths in your life. If you sincerely do these things, you will see a distinct change in your life in less than a year! This is guaranteed!

- You’ll see yourself develop a greater level of faith.
- You’ll see yourself living with greater confidence and spiritual authority.
- You’ll see greater miracles and demonstrations of power in your life.
- And you’ll see yourself obeying God with a much deeper devotion and commitment.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



New Testament

Spiritual Hypocrisy



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain why Jesus cursed the fig tree.
- To teach how we can bear fruit.
- To emphasise the importance of remaining in Jesus daily.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Mark 11:12-14, 19-21; John 15:1-17



MEMORY VERSE

1 John 2:4: “The man who says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Material Needed:

Gift wrapped box with item inside.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- How can we grow in faith, and stop being full of fear and doubt?
Fear and doubt can be removed only through a divine revelation of God's Love.
- How can we get a greater revelation of God's love each week?
Revelation of God's love increases only when we spend enough time with Him.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

Over the last four weeks, we studied different aspects of who Jesus is. We saw His deity and His humanity. We studied the different symbols He used to describe Himself (His I Am Sayings). And we looked at His character. Over the remaining weeks, we will look at some important teachings of Jesus on key themes. This week we'll cover New Testament teaching on Fruit Bearing.

Note to Facilitator

This session dwells briefly on a few key aspects of Fruit Bearing, at different age-levels:

Primary Level:

- How Fruit of the Spirit grows in us

Junior Level:

- Lessons from the cursed Fig Tree

Senior Level:

- How/Why God prunes us



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: The Gift

Place a worthless item inside a box and nicely gift wrap it. Choose an item that the students will not be able to guess easily (a clock that doesn't work, or a torn pair of socks, or a rotten tomato, etc.).

Ask the students to guess what's in the box. Promise that the person who guesses correctly gets to keep the gift. (*If you think the children would be too disappointed, you could probably comfort them with chocolates after the activity*).

After a few guesses, open the box and show them what's inside.

Explain

This gift box is a 'hypocrite'. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be wonderful on the outside but is rotten inside. Jesus hated the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who pretended to be deeply spiritual in public, but were secretly living in sin.



TEACHING CONTENT

Read Aloud

Mark 11:12-14, 19-21 (*The students can take turns reading aloud one verse each*).

Discuss

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

Because it had no fruits. Jesus was hungry, and He felt disappointed when He saw there were no fruits.

According to verse 13, why were there no figs on the tree?

Because it was not the season for figs.

If it wasn't fig season, was it right on Jesus' part to curse the fig tree for not bearing figs?

(Ask the children for their opinions. The goal of this question is simply to get their full attention.)

Explain

Fig trees are a common sight in the land of Israel. In Jesus' times, many of the poor people ate figs when hungry, because they were freely available everywhere.

Every year fig trees went through a fruit-bearing cycle. In March, the fig trees would put forth edible buds. Then later, in April, the trees would begin to bear leaves, and figs would begin to grow. So a fig tree that had finished leafing would definitely have fruits on it.

When Jesus was going to Jerusalem, it was not yet fig season. Most of the fig trees had edible buds on them, but the leaves hadn't grown yet. So Jesus must have been surprised when He saw this particular fig tree covered with leaves. Being very hungry, He eagerly went to the tree looking for fruit.

But Jesus found neither edible buds nor fig fruits on this tree. In a way, the tree lied ... Its leaves seemed to say that there were figs available. But the truth is that there were no figs. There weren't even any edible buds.

If a fig tree finishes leafing and does not produce buds or figs, it indicates that it won't bear any fruit even when the fruit-bearing season starts. So Jesus cursed the fig tree.

How this applies to us

Some Christians are like this fig tree. They look extremely spiritual. They are actively involved in church. They pray long, beautiful prayers. And they are able to quote dozens of memory verses effortlessly.

But there is no fruit in their lives. They treat people harshly and hurt them. They grumble against God and are never grateful. They live in secret sin.

Looking at their outer spirituality, people think they're godly and praise them. But the hidden truth is something else!

Jesus detests this kind of hypocrisy. If a hypocrite does not repent and correct his ways, the Lord will expose his hypocrisy—just as it happened with the Pharisees of Jesus' day.

So if any of us have been entertaining spiritual hypocrisy in our lives, now is the time to repent and return to God!

Remember—"The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did" (1 John 2:4-6).



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

What must we do to bear fruit—so that we don't get labeled as hypocrites?

Jesus said, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:4).

Jesus also said, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love" (John 15:10).

So we must choose to 'remain' in Jesus by keeping His commandments—especially the command He specifically mentions in John 15:17 - "This is my command: Love each other." A person who keeps this command will not become a hypocrite.

What must we do to bear the nine Fruit of the Spirit?

Galatians 5:16 says, "... live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

In other words, we must 'remain' in Jesus and do everything that His Spirit commands us to do. If we walk by the Spirit in this way, He Himself will produce the fruits of the Spirit inside us.

How do we walk by the Spirit?

- By choosing to give up our selfishness.
- By choosing not to grumble against the Lord.
- By choosing not to worry over problems.
- By choosing not to hit out at those who hurt us, etc.

When we walk by the Spirit in this way, and choose to give up the negative things that we feel tempted to do, then God Himself will produce the positive inside us. He will begin to fill us with love towards others, with joy even in the midst of difficulties, with faith to overcome impossibilities, etc.

What will happen if I don't 'remain' in Jesus daily?

Such a person will not grow spiritually. They will not become Christ-like in their thoughts, words and deeds. The plans God has for their lives will never be fulfilled. They will live average lives and never experience the level of joy, peace and success (fruitfulness) that God had planned for them. In other words, they will remain 'hypocrites'.



APPLICATION

Make a decision today to 'remain' in Jesus on a daily basis and walk by His Spirit. If you stick with your decision, you will see the Fruit of the Spirit coming alive in your life.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



New Testament

Beatitudes



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach on the importance of exercising meekness and self-restraint.
- To explain that the Lord is a God of justice.
- To show the significance of being merciful.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Matthew 5:3-12, 6:14-15, 7:9-11, 9:36-38, 18:21-35; Luke 6:20-26, 11:11-13, 18:1-8; Romans 12:19-21



MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:5-7: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- According to Jesus, what must we do to bear fruit in our lives?
- This week, what choices did you make to show Jesus you want to stay joined to Him? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

In the first four weeks, we studied different aspects of who Jesus is. We saw His deity and His humanity. We studied the different symbols He used to describe Himself (His I Am Sayings). And we looked at His character. Then we began to study some of Jesus' teachings, starting with His teaching on fruit-bearing. This week we will take a closer look at the Beatitudes that Jesus taught during His Sermon on the Mount.

Note to Facilitator

Different Beatitudes are being covered at different age-levels:

Primary Level

- Blessed are the poor in spirit
- Blessed are those who mourn

Junior Level

- Blessed are the meek
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
- Blessed are the merciful

Senior Level

- Blessed are the pure in heart
- Blessed are the peacemakers
- Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness

**ATTENTION GETTER****Activity: What did Jesus mean?****Read Aloud**

(The children can take turns reading one verse each.)

Matthew 7:9-11 and Luke 11:11-13

Ask

Matthew 7:11 promises that our Father in heaven will give “good gifts” to those who ask Him. What kind of gifts do you think Jesus was referring to?

Good health, cool clothes, an interesting birthday gift, good friends, good marks, etc.

According to Luke 11:13, which specific “good gift” will our Father in heaven give to those who ask Him?

The gift of the Holy Spirit.

Explain

When Matthew sat down to write the “Gospel of Matthew,” the Lord reminded him of Jesus’ words and asked him to record them in a certain way (2 Timothy 3:16).

Similarly, when Luke sat down to write the “Gospel of Luke,” the Lord again reminded him of Jesus’ words and asked him to record them in a certain way (2 Peter 1:21).

If someone read only Luke 11:11-13, they would get the wrong impression that the only “good gift” God wanted to give us is the Holy Spirit. They may assume that God is not interested in providing other gifts as well.

Therefore we get a more complete picture of God’s teachings only when we read ‘all’ of Scripture. It is harmful to ignore and neglect some portions of Scripture, because then we may not catch the full message that Jesus is trying to teach.



TEACHING CONTENT

Jesus’ teaching on the Beatitudes is recorded in two places: Matthew 5:3-12 and Luke 6:20-26

When we do a study of both these Beatitude passages, we discover that Jesus was talking about both material as well as spiritual aspects. (Just as in the Attention-getter, where Jesus referred to both spiritual gifts as well material gifts).

Blessed are the Poor

Matthew 5:3 specifically talks about spiritual poverty. Luke 6:20,24 however refers to both spiritual and material poverty.

Blessed are Those Who Mourn

Matthew 5:4 speaks of mourning in general. But Luke 6:21,25 focuses more on those who mourn spiritually for their sins and repent of them.

As you have already studied these two Beatitudes at the Primary Level, we will not dwell on them in detail during this session. Today we will focus more on the next three Beatitudes that follow.

Why Jesus Preached the Beatitudes

Read Aloud

(Ask the students to read aloud).

Matthew 9:36-38

Explain

When Jesus looked at the common people, He saw how harassed and helpless they were. They didn't have shepherds who could teach them the wonderful "good news". Therefore He urged his disciples to start praying that the Lord would send out many shepherds who would preach the marvelous "good news" that was now available.

What is the good news in the Beatitudes?

The good news that Jesus was offering can be described in simple English in this way:

"Up to now you have been harassed and helpless. But now that I have arrived, you are blessed!"

The word 'blessed' which Jesus used in the beatitudes, means "divinely happy and fortunate."

In the Beatitudes, Jesus spoke to eight different categories of people and explained to them why they were now "divinely happy and fortunate."

Beatitude 1

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20).

This is what Jesus meant by these words:

- Irrespective of whether you are spiritually poor or materially poor, you are "divinely happy and fortunate." If you believe in Me, I'll make you citizens of God's kingdom and you will be able to enjoy ALL of its privileges.

Can you imagine how wonderful this must have sounded to the people sitting on the mountain!

Beatitude 2

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).

This is what Jesus meant by these words:

- If you are mourning due to the terrible things that have befallen you, you are “divinely happy and fortunate.” Why? Because now I am here to comfort you.
- And if you are mourning for your sins and wish to repent, then I will forgive you completely ... no matter how dark your sins.

Imagine how comforting this must have sounded to someone raw with pain, or consumed with guilt!

In a similar manner, Jesus went on to address six more categories of persons. We will look at three of them now.

Beatitudes 3-5

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy (Matthew 5:5-7).

In these Beatitudes, Jesus seems to be specifically addressing those who have been wronged. He urges them to face the injustice done to them, with the right attitude.

The Meek—An Attitude of Love

In the original Greek Bible, Matthew 5:5 says “Blessed are the praeis.” This Greek word ‘praeis’ was used to describe wild horses that had been tamed.

Our English Bible translates this word as ‘meek’. In other words, a meek person is someone who has learned to control his strength.

- When a wicked person does harm to a meek person, the meek person will not allow his mind to be filled with rage and hatred towards the one who has hurt him. He exercises control over his mind and chooses to forgive and forget!
- Similarly, the meek person doesn’t spew out angry words of hatred. He exercises control over his tongue and responds to the enemy with calm, reasonable words.
- Likewise, the meek person doesn’t punch his enemy in the face. Even if he is a karate black-belt, he will not use physical violence to express his anger.

So a meek person is somebody who is incredibly strong. He is strong enough to exercise control over his mind, his tongue and his body!

Jesus seemed to be saying to His audience, “Are you tired of being meek and patient? Do you feel like breaking your enemy’s bones, or at least cursing him with bad words? Don’t get tired of being meek! If you’re meek you are ‘blessed.’ Why? Because I own this earth, and as my children, you can inherit all of it! I’ll meet all your needs. You don’t have to be rough, rude or violent to get what you need. I will provide you with everything you need, both in this life and the next!”

So those who choose to be meek are “divinely happy and fortunate.” Why? Because they can have anything on earth that they need—their Father will get it for them!

Those Hungering for Justice—An Attitude of Unflinching Faith in God’s Justice

In the original Greek Bible, Matthew 5:6 speaks of people who hunger for ‘dikaiousune’ Almost every Bible Dictionary that’s currently available, explains this word as ‘justice’.

(Under the influence of the King James Version, many modern English translations use the word 'righteousness' instead of 'justice.' However 'justice' is the more accurate word, as agreed by most Greek Bible scholars.)

Did you know that there was a lot of injustice and exploitation during Jesus' times? In those days, Jewish religious leaders served as judges, and these leaders manipulated the Scriptures to pass judgments that exploited the helpless (Mark 12:40). In this way, the leaders became very rich and very powerful, and the common people were too weak and helpless to fight against them.

Jesus promised these helpless people that if they were hungry for justice, He would satisfy their deep hunger.

The Merciful—An Attitude of Undeserved Mercy

Mercy is the love and kindness that we show people, when they don't deserve it. Jesus says in this beatitude that it's good to be merciful.

He seems to be saying, "Have you grown tired of showing mercy to undeserving people? Do you feel as if they're taking advantage of you? Continue to be merciful even if they don't deserve your kindness, because then you will be 'divinely happy and fortunate.' Why? Because the next time you don't deserve my mercy, I'll remember what you have done for another, and I'll show you mercy—even though you don't deserve it."

To sum up, this is the good news that Jesus preached to the people:

- We don't have to be rough, rude or violent to get what we need. If we choose to be meek, our Heavenly Father who owns this earth, will provide us with everything we could possibly need!
- We don't have to put up with injustice. If we choose to place our faith in God (and refuse to believe that he would deny us justice), then in His perfect time, the Lord will avenge the wrongs done to us.

- We don't have to worry that if we show people kindness, they'll take advantage of us and 'use' us. If we choose to continue being merciful, we will experience God's great mercy in our own lives.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.

If the class-bully picks on me, should I be meek and silent? Won't this lead to greater harassment? And won't it make people see me as a weakling?

A meek person has great faith in God's justice. He truly believes that God will take a personal interest in what he is facing, and act on his behalf.

Because he trusts God so deeply, he does what the Lord commands in Romans 12:19-21.

- He doesn't take revenge.
- He waits for God to avenge him.
- He shows genuine love to his enemy, and offers practical help when needed.

When your classmates see you responding to the bully in this way, they may think you're weak. They may think you're too scared to retaliate. But the God who is watching from heaven will see the amount of strength and self-control you have exercised in controlling your anger and staying calm. He'll see your great strength and discipline in doing this, and reward you for it.

When the right time comes, God will satisfy your hunger for justice. He will avenge the wrong that has been done to

you by the bully. (Please read Luke 18:1-8 if you're suffering injustice at someone's hands. Don't have any doubts that God will grant you justice).

Note: In cases where the bullying and teasing is extreme, please report it to a teacher, or at least to your parents. They will take necessary steps to protect you from further harm.

- Being meek involves being kind and merciful to those who don't deserve it.
- However being meek does NOT mean giving up justice. If serious physical abuse and mental trauma is involved, please go to the school authorities for justice and protection. (Do NOT take revenge into your own hands).

In Luke 6:21,25 Jesus said, “Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied ... Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry ...” Does this mean Jesus doesn't want me to be well-fed?

As we learnt earlier, we need to study both the Matthew passage and the Luke passage together, to clearly understand the Beatitudes.

Matthew 5:6 clearly talks about a hunger for 'justice;' it doesn't speak of a physical hunger for food. The Luke passage, on the other hand, seems to be talking about physical hunger, as it mentions “well-fed” people.

When we look at both passages in context, the meaning becomes clear:

- In Luke 6:21 Jesus reassures those who have been starving for food, because they have been exploited by wicked and unjust people. He promises them justice, so that they can fill their stomachs once more with good food.

Beatitudes

- Then in Luke 6:25 Jesus warns the people who are ‘well-fed’—people who have grown rich by exploiting the weak and helpless. He warns them that when judgment comes upon them, they’ll go hungry and pay for their sins.

So Verse 25 is not saying that God is against well-fed people in general. He is simply against those who exploit others and cause injustice.

Jesus once narrated a parable which beautifully brings out the truth contained in the fifth beatitude—“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7).

- **Can you guess which parable this is?**
- **How does this parable explain the truths in the beatitude?**

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35) beautifully elaborates on the truths contained in the fifth beatitude.

- The unmerciful servant refused to show mercy to his fellow servant.
- Therefore the king too refused to show him mercy, in a similar manner.

At the end of the parable Jesus said, “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart” (Matthew 18:35).

Also during the sermon on the mountain itself, Jesus said, “If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15).

So if we are merciful towards others, we’re very ‘blessed’ people indeed! God will be extremely merciful towards us—even when we don’t deserve it!



APPLICATION

How do you usually respond when people hurt or offend you? What is the kind of attitude that you're expected to have, according to the Beatitudes? Please reflect on these questions.

Based on what we studied today, this should be your response:

- Do not retaliate or take revenge.
- Show love in practical ways to the person who has hurt you.
- If your life is in danger, then immediately go to the concerned authorities for protection and help.
- But if there's no immediate danger, then be merciful to the person and give them time to change their ways.
- Wait for the Lord to grant full justice, instead of taking the matter into your own hands.
- Fully expect the Lord to grant you justice. Don't have any doubts that He will do so.

Think of ways to apply these lessons to your own situations and circumstances.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



New Testament

Kingdom of God



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show that God is king over even the most powerful people of the earth.
- To teach that the Kingdom of God offers protection against Satan.
- To motivate students to exercise their authority as citizens of God's Kingdom.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Daniel 4; Psalms 37:12-13; John 12:31, 14:30, 16:33; Genesis 1:28; 1 John 5:18-19; James 5:16; Mark 11:23-24



MEMORY VERSE

Daniel 4:17: "... the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why should I be meek and silent when people harass and ill-treat me?
- What must we do to experience God's mercy in abundance?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

In the first four weeks, we studied different aspects of who Jesus is. We saw His deity and His humanity. We studied the different symbols He used to describe Himself (His I Am Sayings). And we looked at His character. Then we began to study some of Jesus' teachings, starting with His teaching on fruit-bearing. This week we'll take a closer look at Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God.

Note to Facilitator

Different aspects of the Kingdom of God are being covered at different age-levels:

Primary Level

- Invisible Kingdom of God

Junior Level

- Power of the Kingdom of God

Senior Level

- What is the Kingdom of God?
- Who is part of the Kingdom of God?



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Proof They Existed

The Student Workbook contains a table titled “Proof they existed.” Go through the table with the children, explaining the various historical facts to them:

- 200 years ago, people said that dinosaurs were imaginary creatures. But now archaeologists have discovered dinosaur fossils that prove they existed.
- 100 years ago, people said that giant snails don’t exist. But now archaeologists have discovered giant fossils that prove they existed.
- 150 years ago, people said that Jonah’s visit to Nineveh was an imaginary story. But now archaeologists have discovered the ancient city of Nineveh. They have also found an archaeological mound near the city with the name Nebi Yūnis (“the Prophet Jonah”).
- 70 years ago, people said that King David was just a fictional character in the Bible. But now archaeologists have discovered the palace that he lived in.
- 70 years ago, scholars said that the Bible story about Nebuchadnezzar’s mental illness was just a fictional story, because none of the Babylonian artifacts mentioned any such incident. But three of the Aramaic scrolls discovered in the Dead Sea Caves now prove this incident did happen. Moreover Tablet No. BM 34113 (in the British Museum), which was written in Babylonian cuneiform text, seems to refer to this incident.

It’s important for us to remember that everything in the Bible really happened! Our God is powerful enough to make even impossible things happen! Today we will take a brief look at just how powerful the Kingdom of God really is, as demonstrated in the story of Nebuchadnezzar.



TEACHING CONTENT

God Humbled Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4)

(Adapted from Ministry-to-Children.com)

During the time of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a frightening dream. He called for his wise men and asked them to explain what it meant. When none of the king's wise men could interpret his dream Daniel was brought in.

Daniel listened carefully as King Nebuchadnezzar began to tell him his dream. "In my dream I saw an enormous tree in the middle of the land. The tree grew strong and tall and the top of the tree touched the sky. Everyone in all the land could see the huge tree. The tree had beautiful leaves and so much fruit that it could feed everyone. Under the tree I saw animals resting in its shade and birds resting in the branches. As I was looking at this amazing tree a holy messenger came down and spoke in a loud voice. He said, 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter the fruit. Make the animals run away from the tree and cause the birds to fly away. Keep the stump in the ground along with the roots. Put a band of iron and bronze around the stump. The stump is going to be wet with the dew from heaven and will live among the animals in the field. The stump won't have the mind of a human but the mind of an animal. The stump will stay that way for seven years.'"

When Nebuchadnezzar finished telling Daniel the dream he sat silent. This dream terrified Daniel. Even though Daniel had been captured by Babylonian soldiers and taken far from his home in Jerusalem, he had forgiven Nebuchadnezzar. He had grown to care for King Nebuchadnezzar. What the Lord revealed to Daniel about the dream caused him to be fearful of how the king would respond. His life could be in danger because the truth he was about to share was not going to be good news for the king.

Even though the truth about the dream wasn't going to make Nebuchadnezzar happy, Daniel chose to tell what the dream meant. "King Nebuchadnezzar I wish this dream was meant for your worst enemies but unfortunately it is not. The tree you saw, well that tree was you. You have become a great and powerful king. Your greatness is known all over the world. God has ordered that your kingdom will be taken away from you and you will be sent to live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like cows and live outside for seven years. The stump that has a band around it is symbolic of how after you acknowledge that God is the Ruler of all kingdoms you will be given your kingdom back."

Daniel knew that God forgives those who repent and turn away from their sin. He urged King Nebuchadnezzar to do that because He did not want to see Nebuchadnezzar punished for his pride. Read verse 27.

Daniel shared the truth with Nebuchadnezzar but the choice to turn from pride was up to the king. Sadly, Nebuchadnezzar did not listen to Daniel's advice.

Just twelve months later, he was walking on the balcony of the royal palace in Babylon and boasted, "Look at this, Babylon the great! And I built it all by myself, a royal palace adequate to display my honor and glory!" While the prideful words of Nebuchadnezzar were still on his lips a voice from heaven spoke to him. Immediately the kingdom was taken away from Nebuchadnezzar and he was sent out to live with the wild animals.

The king's dream had come true. He lived like a wild animal for seven years. The once powerful king was now crawling around like a wild animal (Verse 33).

God knew how long it would take for Nebuchadnezzar to finally acknowledge that He is the One who is in control over all kingdoms. After seven years of living like a wild animal, Nebuchadnezzar finally acknowledged that God is the King over all. He was given back his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar praised God and no longer lived as a prideful king.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Psalms 37:12-13 says, “The wicked plot against the righteous and gnash their teeth at them; but the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming.” In what way are these verses similar to what happened to Nebuchadnezzar?

Nebuchadnezzar was a cruel king who had no fear of God. After capturing the Israelites, he took the Israelite princes and nobles back to Babylon as slaves. Just for the sake of humiliating them, he took away all their clothes and chained them. They were dragged all the way to Babylon in this pitiful state.

The only reason why God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to do this was because the Israelites had lived in terrible sin for hundreds of years and refused to listen to God’s warnings. However Nebuchadnezzar was under the impression that the victory over the Israelites was due to his own human strength and might.

The Lord must have laughed at Nebuchadnezzar’s’ pride in thinking he was all-powerful. So when the right time came, God reduced this ‘all-powerful’ king to the position of a wild animal, and the king roamed around naked in the jungles like a senseless maniac.

When the day of correction and judgment comes, not even the most powerful persons can withstand God. He alone is ruler over all!

In India a lot of very powerful persons are planning and scheming to bring down Christians. What do you think God’s response is towards them?

Psalms 37:13 says, “... the Lord laughs at the wicked, for he knows their day is coming.” The Lord is extremely loving and patient. After

warning Nebuchadnezzar through the dream, He waited another twelve years for the king to repent and turn from his wicked ways. Even after this failed, only then did God punish Nebuchadnezzar.

It is the same with the powerful people who are opposing Christians in India. The Lord loves them and is being patient with them. However when the day of correction finally comes, they will be judged by God.

Who is the ruler of the world today? God or satan? Are we safe?

In John 12:31 Jesus described satan as the “ruler of this world.” Originally God appointed Adam as the ruler of this world (Genesis 1:28). But Satan tempted Adam and Eve into sin and stole the rulership from them.

All people—except for believers—are open to attack at the hands of satan because he is their ruler. On the other hand believers can be controlled by satan only to the extent that they allow sin to rule in their lives.

Jesus died on the cross and rose victorious, so that He could open up the Kingdom of God to everyone and grant them protection. Jesus said, “... the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me ...” (John 14:30). Satan has absolutely no control over Jesus who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. So, all those who accept Jesus as Lord and stay away from sin, enjoy the protection of the Kingdom of God.

To sum up, satan is ruling the world today. But the Kingdom of God is also here. Those who choose to stay under the protection of the King of Kings need not be controlled by the evil ruler of the world.

If I carefully avoid sin and live for God, will I be perfectly shielded from all harm?

Because we live in a sinful world, suffering hits even believers. Jesus said in John 16:33, “In this world you will have trouble.” Then in the very next sentence he said, “But take heart! I have overcome the

world” (John 16:33). Through Jesus we can pray and gain victory over every difficulty that hits us.



APPLICATION

We belong to the Kingdom of God if we have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior. Satan has no hold over us.

1 John 5:18-19 says, “We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.”

When trials and hardships hit us, it helps to check and see if we have opened ourselves to satan in any way—through some sinful attitude or action. If anything comes to mind, all we need to do is genuinely repent and return to God. We can then confidently claim victory over the situation in Jesus’ Name.

- Pray to the Lord for help, as the prayers of a righteous person are very effective (James 5:16).
- Then boldly speak to the mountain (your problem) and command it to be moved (Mark 11:23-24).

If you belong to the Kingdom of God you have the authority to live in victory because your Lord and King has “overcome the world” on your behalf.

So take a few minutes and reflect on the areas of your life that you need to set right. Close all the doors of your life to Satan, so that he may not have control over you. And take the effort to share these things with non-Christians so that they too can enter into the protection of the Kingdom of God.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

