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Bible Lesson 20 (BTJ)

1. Introduction

This lesson continues to build upon the story of Jesus Christ's ministry on earth. There are significant points in this lesson to be taught to the people and they need to understand them well.

The lesson begins with Jesus teaching about responses to his teachings. Either a person accepts them like a wise man building on a firm foundation or he rejects them like a man building his house upon sand. The application is easy to make and understand.

Then several of Jesus miracles are taught each with its significant emphasis. In the parable of the sower, it shows different kinds of soils upon which the good seed fell. Again, the application is easy to make and people need to be challenged to be honest with themselves about what kind of soil they are.

The other miracles which Jesus preformed testify again to his divinity. These miracles were performed before many people. Even though they testify to the fact that Jesus was not merely another human being, many who witnessed these events failed to see that he was God in a human body living among them. It is important for the people to understand that Jesus was God in the flesh. He is divine.

Though these stories about Jesus demonstrated his love for people, the unbelieving Pharisees did not like him. They hated him without a cause. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their self-righteousness. Again the application can be made that everyone listening to these lessons need to avoid a Pharisee-like response to these messages.

This lesson also covers new information in a more explicit manner about events which would take place in the life of Christ. It is as if the curtain is pulled back a bit to help people see that Jesus would suffer many things before he completed his mission on earth.

The lesson ends with the parable of the good Shepherd. Jesus wanted people to understand that he alone was God's provision for the spiritual needs of people. Through him alone people can be made right with God and be saved from their sins. He alone has the way, the truth, and the life. He alone is God's way for people to come to God.

2. Review

Setting: Patrick and his family talk about the miracles and teachings of Jesus.

Grace: We are learning so much about Jesus. I think about him all the time. He came

because he loves us and he wants us to believe in him.

Patrick: Jesus knew the Pharisees hated him. However, when Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to him at night, he treated him kindly. He talked to him respectfully pointing out that Nicodemus should not trust in his own good works for being right with God.

Grace: Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again. Why did Jesus say that to a religious leader?

Patrick: Nicodemus needed to believe God's Word and admit that he was a sinner. He needed to believe in God, to trust him and quit trusting in the things he did which he believed made him right with God.

Grace: Do you think we've been self-righteous like Nicodemus? After all, we were taught that our ways are the right ones.

Patrick: I think that we have been like Nicodemus. We have believed that we are good people. However, all of us have sinned many times against God. We need God to show mercy and grace to us. Otherwise, we will die in our sins.

Grace: That's true, we need God's help. We must not be like the unbelieving Jewish leaders. They saw Jesus do many miracles but refused to believe in him.

Patrick: The scribes and Pharisees should have understood that Jesus' power and authority over the sicknesses and demon-possessed people showed that he was from God. But they hardened their hearts against evidence and reason.

Grace: When Jesus said to the paralytic 'your sins are forgiven', the scribes said he was blaspheming God. They did not believe that Jesus was divine, that he was God.

Patrick: Jesus told them he would show them that he had the power to forgive sins by healing the paralyzed man. Then he commanded the paralyzed man to get up and walk. Immediately the paralyzed man jumped up and walked away. Now the scribes were shown evidence that Jesus had the authority to forgive sins.

Grace: Jesus healed a man's crippled hand in the synagogue on a Sabbath day which angered the Jews. The Jews believed that it was wrong to do that kind of work on the Sabbath day so they planned to kill him. They hated Jesus without a reason.

Patrick: If Jesus was right here in our village and he healed the sick people, we would

not treat him like the scribes and Pharisees did. We would be very happy for his compassion and would honor and worship him.

Grace: Jesus also had power over the evil spirits. When demon-possessed people came into the presence of Jesus, the demons knew who he was. They were afraid of him. They recognized that he was the son of God and that he had power over them.

Patrick: We have learned a lot about our Deliverer, Jesus. I want to learn more because I want to be saved from the guilt and penalty of my sins. It is almost time for the meeting to begin. Let's go so that we are not late. We must keep learning about Jesus and about believing in him.

3. The Wise Man and the Foolish Man

Jesus taught the Jews many important truths. He expected them to believe what he was teaching them. He wanted them to listen to his words, to think about the meaning of his teachings, and to obey them. He wanted his words to be understood and obeyed in their living. He gave an example of two responses to his teachings. Jesus wants everyone to think about the meaning of these two examples and to follow the good one.

Jesus said that whoever listens and follows his teachings is like a wise builder who built his house upon a solid rock. Why would a wise man build his house upon a solid rock? A building that is built upon a solid foundation will last a long time. It will not quickly fall down during high winds and storms because it rests securely upon a foundation. Storms and bad weather may strike a building built upon a firm foundation, but it will not fall down. Though storms rage on the outside, its residents are safe and secure inside. The house's firm foundation secures the whole building and makes a safe dwelling.

Jesus said that whoever heard his teaching and ignores it is like a foolish person who built his house upon sand. Why would use sand for its foundation? Is sand able to securely hold a house in place? A house which is built upon sand does not have a solid foundation. What happens to it when heavy rains and storms strike it? What happens to it when the wind and rain beat against it hour after hour, day after day? It will not be able to stand because the bad weather, floods, and the wind will erode the sand and it will collapse. The meaning of this teaching applies to all of us. Either we are like a wise man and accept Jesus's teachings or we are like a foolish man who doesn't care about his teachings. Who are you like? Are you like the wise man or the foolish man? You know whether or not you are like a wise man. You know whether or not you are like the foolish man. Who else knows who you are like? God knows who you are like. He knows whether or not you believe the messages you are hearing. Remember, God knows everything about everyone.

If you are wise, then you believe the Bible's teachings. If you believe the Bible's teachings, then God will show you mercy and grace. The right thing to do is to believe in faithful, unchangeable God and the Bible's teachings, especially the teachings about Jesus Christ. It is only reasonable to trust in the only one who can save us from our sins. If you are believing in the teachings that you have been hearing, then you are like the wise man who built his house upon a very solid rock. To accept the Bible's teachings, to believe in God and Jesus, means you are trusting in truth that never changes.

But, if you do not believe these stories, then you are like the foolish man who built his house upon the sand. If you do not believe these stories, then you are either rejecting them or holding onto another story which you believe is truth. Beliefs and religions which are based upon something other than the Bible are like sand. They do not have reliable answers for the spiritual needs of people. They are unreliable and false. If you believe in these teachings, you will be disappointed. They can no more endure than sand can provide a secure foundation for a house.

If you believe in any other teaching than the Bible, you will be disappointed in this life and in the after life. God will not show you mercy and grace to you if you do not believe in him. When you come to the end of your life, you will die and go to the awful place of the never-ending fire of punishment. God wants you to believe in him. He wants you to believe in Jesus, the Deliverer. He wants to show you mercy and grace. He wants to forgive you of your sins so that you will have eternal life.

4. The Parable of the Sower

Jesus continued to teach the people and large crowds followed him from place to place. Why did all these people follow Jesus? They followed him because they wanted to hear his teachings which were filled with meaning. They were tired of the meaningless empty words of their religious leaders.

One day Jesus was teaching by the seashore and a very large crowd gathered around him. They desperately wanted to hear his words. The crowd was so large and pressing upon him that he got into a boat and sat in the boat as he talked to the people standing on the seashore. He taught them a parable about a man who sowed seeds in a field. Parables were stories with spiritual lessons about ordinary, everyday things and happenings which were familiar to the Jews. They taught about God, his ways and our need for him.

Jesus told this parable. "Listen to this!" He said. "A farmer went out in his field to sow

some seeds. As he sowed the seeds across his field, some of the seeds fell on a footpath where people walk. What happened to those seeds? Some birds quickly came and ate them. Some of the seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. What happened to those seeds? Those seeds sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. Some of the seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!" Jesus spoke in parables to the Jews because many of them did not believe in him. They followed him, watched him perform many miracles, and they listened to his teachings. But still they did not believe in him. Some of the people followed him because they were curious about Jesus. They wanted see first hand who he was. These people too did not see themselves as sinners needing God's mercy and grace. They believed that their own goodness was sufficient to make God happy with them.

Others however, knew they were sinners and admitted that they needed God's mercy and grace. They wanted the Deliverer, the one whom God had promised to send, to save them from the guilt and penalty of their sins. That is why they followed Jesus. They longed to be forgiven of their sins. These people were able to understand the spiritual lessons in the parables.

The seeds that fell by the pathway were quickly eaten by the birds. The hearts and minds of some people are like a hard path. The Word of God does not affect them in the least bit. They're not interested in learning new truth, especially if it is about God and his good ways. They just think about themselves, not God's Word. When they hear God's Word, they quickly forget it. It's too boring for them. Satan quickly takes away the truth they heard and they remain sinners with hardened hearts separated from God.

The seeds that fell on rocky ground are like people who hear God's Word and are excited about it for a little while. At first it looks like they are responding well to God's Word. However as soon as there is some opposition from others they turn away from God's Word. They are like that shallow soil on top of a rock bed. They have no depth to hold onto God's truth. Like a plant growing in shallow soil on top of a rock wilts in the sun, so too do people whose faith has a shallow foundation quickly abandon God's Word.

The seeds that fell among thorns begin to grow but are choked out by the thorns and die. They are like people who believe God's Word yet they are influenced by the ways of the world. Because they care about earthly things, quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the desire for wealth and other things. The seed sown among the thorny ground yielded no fruit. People who are like seeds sown in thorny ground likewise

do not yield spiritual fruit for God because they are too entangled with the affairs and cares of this world.

The seed that fell upon the good ground is like the Word of God being received by people who believe in God and submit to him.

They know that they are sinners and deserve death. They know they cannot save themselves. They know that their good works, their heritage, or any other thing to their credit will not save them from the guilt and penalty of being a sinner. They trust in God and believe what his word says. They turn away from evil and wickedness. They reject beliefs and practices that are exposed by the Word of God as false beliefs. They trust God and they believe in Jesus, the Deliverer. Their lives bring honor and glory to God because they are true believers in him.

Ask yourself, “What kind of soil am I? What kind of soil am I?” God wants everyone to think seriously about their own response to this teaching. He wants everyone to be like the good soil. He wants his truth to be accepted and believed by everyone. He wants everyone to trust him and to believe in Jesus, the Deliverer.

5. Jesus Calmed the Storm

In the evening, after Jesus taught the people in parables, many of the people were still there with him and his disciples. Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.” Then Jesus and his disciples got into a boat and started to cross the sea of Galilee.

Jesus was tired from his busy day of teaching so many people. He laid down in the back of the boat with his head on a cushion and fell asleep. Soon there was a very bad storm and the waves were very high, splashing over the boat and filling it with water. Jesus kept on sleeping unaffected by the strong storm. The disciples became frantic and awakened him shouting, “Teacher, we’re going to drown! Don’t you care about us?” Of course Jesus cared for them! He was sleeping because he was tired after a busy day of work teaching so many people.

When Jesus awoke and saw what was going on, he spoke to the storm, he rebuked the wind and the water and said, “Silence! Be still!” As soon as he had spoken, the strong wind stopped blowing, and there was a great calm over the sea. The storm which had been raging and threatening to overturn their boat was over! Immediately, the storm’s wind and waves obeyed the command of Jesus as though he were speaking to another person. What an awesome demonstration of power! Jesus had the power to control the wind and waves because he is the creator, owner, and controller of all creation.

Then Jesus asked the disciples, “Why are you afraid? Do you still lack faith?” Jesus wanted them to believe in him at all times regardless of their circumstances. After all Jesus was God in a human body and no power was as great as his. No power or circumstance could overtake him or destroy him at any time.

When the disciples saw all these things they were absolutely terrified. They had seen the awesome power of God through Jesus. By his spoken command, Jesus quieted the raging, stormy sea, a feat no human being could ever do. Jesus wanted them to know that he truly was God in a human body. He showed them his divinity through performing this miracle. He wanted them to know that he had power over all things including forgiving people’s sins. They needed to believe in him, to believe that he truly was the promised Deliverer who could save them from the penalty of sin.

6. Jesus Healed a Demon-Possessed Man

Jesus and his disciples arrived on the other side the Sea of Galilee. As they climbed out of

the boat, a man who was possessed by an evil spirit came out from a cemetery to meet them. This man did not live with people in a village because he was controlled by an evil spirit. He lived in the burial caves and was so violent and strong that he could not be restrained with chains and shackles. Day and night this man wandered among the burial caves. He would scream and cut himself with sharp stones.

This pitiful, helpless man, when he saw Jesus, ran to him and bowed down before him. With a loud shriek he said, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, please do not torture me!” This man begged Jesus to not torture him because Jesus had already been saying to the evil spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.”

The evil spirits or demons living within the man were many. They knew who Jesus was. They knew that he was their creator against whom they had rebelled when they followed Satan in his wicked rebellion against God. All of the evil spirits knew that Jesus, the Son of God, was more powerful than they. They knew that Jesus, God in a human body, could do with them whatever he wanted to do. They knew that they were powerless against him. They could not stop him from judging them. That’s why they were afraid of Jesus. They were afraid that he might immediately send them to the never-ending fire of punishment. The awesomeness of who Jesus is completely overwhelmed them.

In the same place there was a large herd of two thousand pigs feeding along the hillside nearby. The evil spirits within the man begged Jesus to give them permission to enter the pigs. Jesus gave permission for the evil spirits to do so and they came out of the man and entered the entire herd of pigs. The demon possessed man was now free from the evil spirits who had controlled him. Now they were in the pigs and caused the pigs to run down the steep hillside and plunge into the lake. All of the pigs drowned in the water.

The men who had been taking care of the pigs ran to the nearby town and told everybody what had happened. The people, who heard the report, quickly went to see what happened. There they saw that the man who had been possessed by many evil spirits was healed. He was no longer insane. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane. There was nothing wrong with the man but they were still afraid of him. The herdsman who had seen everything happen told the others about the man being set free from evil spirits and the pigs rushing headlong into the sea.

What do you think the people did when they saw this man in good health? Did they rejoice because he was healed? No, they did not rejoice because he was healed. They

were upset that all of those pigs had died in the sea. They did not recognize that Jesus was God so they begged him to go away and leave them alone. These people acted foolishly. They should have asked Jesus, “Who are you that evil spirits submit to you and obey your commands? Tell us about yourself . We want to know who your are.” They should have been willing to listen to his teachings. They should have desired that Jesus would set them free from living in bondage to sin, but, they didn’t. They just wanted him to leave the area.

Listen to this: Some people in this world do not desire to learn about God. They are foolish. They simply do not care about God. They care about the things of this world. They want to live in ease and pleasure. They live for the moment instead of thinking about their eternal destiny.

Some people would rather live like Cain than obey God. Some would rather be like Esau than to think about God. Are you like them? Please do not respond to God’s goodness like Cain or Esau did. God does not want you to be like them. He wants you to be like Abel who believed in God. He wants you to be like Jacob who believed and trusted God. He wants you to believe in Jesus, the Deliverer. He is the one who can save us from our sin’s penalty.

7. Jesus Fed Five Thousand

Many of the Jews kept following Jesus wherever he went from town to town. Most of the people, however, followed him for the wrong reasons. They hoped he would do something that would help them in an earthly way. They were not looking for spiritual help because they did not recognize their own spiritual neediness. They followed him because they were intrigued by his power to heal sicknesses. While his miracles drew attention to him, they should have been intrigued by who he was, not just what he did.

One day Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. The people kept coming to him until there huge crowd present. Jesus saw the hundreds of people gathered around him asked one of his disciples named Philip, “Where can we buy bread to feed all of these people?” Jesus was testing Philip to see how he would answer. Jesus already knew what he was going to do because he knows everything. Then Andrew, a disciple of Jesus, said, “There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But how would that feed this huge crowd?”

Jesus, God in a human body, knew what he was going to do. He was going to feed all of the people who had come to him. Everyone in that huge crowd would be fed by him. Then Jesus instructed everyone to sit down on the grassy slopes. Then Jesus took the five barley loaves which the young boy had and gave thanks to God. Then he distributed them to the people. He did the same with the fish. Do you think the five loaves and two small fish were enough food to feed five thousand people? How could such a small amount of food become sufficient to feed everyone in that huge crowd?

Remember this: Jesus was God in a human body. Yet he retained his divinity which he demonstrated in this miracle by exercising his power over the natural world. He is the creator and the ruler over all of his creation. No part of his creation exists outside of his control. Jesus had the power to multiply five loaves of barley bread and two fish to be enough food for five thousand persons to eat and be satisfied. All who gathered to see Jesus that day ate as much food as they needed. No, one said, "I'm still hungry. I did not get enough to eat." This truly was an awesome demonstration of power which clearly pointed to Jesus being God.

After everyone had eaten as much as they wanted to, Jesus told his disciples, "Gather the leftovers so that no food is wasted." The disciples obeyed Jesus and went around gathering up the pieces of scraps. Do you think they found any scraps? The disciples filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people. All this came from the five barley loafs and two fish which Jesus multiplied with his divine power.

When the multitude of people saw this miracle, they realized something extraordinary had happened. No person without divine power could do a miracle like they had just witnessed. The people were saying, "Surely, this man is the Prophet we have been expecting!" They were so excited and wanted to make him their king. When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

8. Jesus Walked on Water

In the evening, after Jesus had multiplied the loaves and the fish and fed so many people, his disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. They were going to cross the sea to the other side. Jesus was not with them so they got into the boat and started going across the lake toward Capernaum. As they were going along a strong wind caused the sea to be rough. They rowed for about three or four hours across the Sea of Galilee when all of a sudden they saw Jesus walking on the water toward them. They were terrified. What on earth was going on here?

Jesus knew they were terrified and he called out to them and said, “It is me, do not be afraid!” When the disciples heard his voice, they were calmed and wanted him to come in the boat. Jesus stepped in the boat and immediately they were on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. What an awesome miracle! Not only did Jesus calm the storm but immediately they were at their destiny on the other side of the sea.

Have you ever met someone who could walk on water? How could Jesus walk on water? Do you believe this story? Listen to this: Jesus was able to walk on water because he made water and his power controls all of his creation including water. Jesus was God in a human body which he used to walk on the water. Jesus performed his miracles because he wanted people to believe in him. He wanted them to know the person they saw and heard speak was divine. He wanted people to believe that he was the Deliverer whom God had promised to send.

9. Jesus, the Bread of Life

The day after Jesus had fed five thousand people with five loaves of barley bread and two fish, many people were looking for him. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, “How did you get here?”

Jesus knew that the people were following him because they wanted to be fed again just like he had fed them the day before. He told them, “You want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understand the meaning of the miraculous signs I do.” Jesus told them that they should be concerned about things that last forever. He told them that they should be seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give to them.

Jesus wanted the Jews to believe in him so that he could give them eternal life. Remember this: Without faith in God, it is impossible to please him. That is why Jesus wanted the Jews to believe in him, God in a human body. However, The Jews were interested in things of today. They wanted to be healthy, to have good food to eat, and riches. Jesus wanted them to think beyond this life, to think about where they would spend eternity. Jesus told the Jews that God wanted them to believe in the Person whom he had sent to them. That means Jesus wanted the Jews to believe in him.

Then the Jews said to Jesus, “If you want us to believe in you, then show us a sign. We want to see a miracle. Can you do a miracle?” This was a very foolish thing to ask of Jesus. The day before these same people had witnessed Jesus feeding five thousand people with only five barley loaves and two fish. How could they so quickly forget the awesome power of God displayed through Jesus when he fed the huge crowd of five

thousand?

Then Jews challenged Jesus and said, “Moses gave our ancestors bread from heaven to eat in the wilderness.” They said this to see if Jesus would give in to their request and give them bread every day. How foolish of the Jews to challenge Jesus in this way! Their forefathers ate manna in the wilderness for forty years because of their rebellion and unbelief!

The Jews who challenged Jesus were repeating the mistake of their forefathers who did not trust God. They exposed their arrogance and unbelief by requesting Jesus to do a miracle for them. Jesus clearly knew that their hearts were evil and he replied to them, “Moses did not give your forefathers bread from heaven. God, my Father in heaven, gave your forefathers bread in the wilderness. Today he is offering that bread from heaven to you. The true bread of God is the one who has come down from heaven. He gives life to the world.”

Jesus told the Jews this important truth. He said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Jesus wanted the Jews to understand that he could provide for them what Moses was unable to do for the Israelites. Through Moses, God provided for the physical needs of the Israelites. Through Jesus, God provided for their spiritual needs. Should anyone have refused to eat the food God provided through Moses, they would have died in the wilderness. In the same way, anyone who refuses to believe in Jesus, the only Deliverer, will die in his sin separated from God. The only way a person can be forgiven of his sins is to believe in God, to trust in him and believe that Jesus is the true Deliverer.

10. Jesus Condemned the Pharisees

Jesus knew that the Pharisees did not like him. They were jealous of his popularity and influence among the common people. The Pharisees believed that they knew how to please God by the things they did. The Pharisees made many laws and rules for the Jews to follow. These rules were not from God. However, the Pharisees taught them to the people and demanded that the common people obey these laws. Heavy as these laws were, the Pharisees did not help people follow them. They just demanded strict obedience from all Jews.

One day some scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to see Jesus. They noticed that some of Jesus’ disciples did not follow their rules and they were upset. What were they doing that was so bad? They had seen Jesus’ disciples eat food without first washing their hands.

The scribes and Pharisees challenged Jesus about this and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples follow our age-old tradition and wash their hands before they eat?” The Pharisees were very concerned about people following their rules perfectly. At the same time, their hearts were corrupt and wicked. They did not care about God. They only cared about themselves! They did not love God. They did not truly worship him. No, they just followed their many traditions. They wanted men to praise them for being good people. They did not believe in God or obey him. They were not good people. They were wicked, self-righteous people who needed God’s mercy and grace.

The Pharisees believed and taught that if the Jews ate certain foods, they would be defiled. If they refrained from eating these foods, they believed God would accept them as good people. This is the kind of false teaching that the Pharisees enforced upon others. Did God approve of their religious zeal? Can a person be saved from the penalty of sin by avoiding certain foods? This kind of teaching by the Pharisees was wrong and God hated it because it was essentially trying to be saved by doing certain deeds.

Jesus taught the Jews the truth about what defiles a person. He taught them that the evil which comes from a person’s heart is what defiles him. He taught them that food cannot defile a person. Food strengthens a person’s body for a short time then it becomes waste. However, evil thoughts coming from a person’s heart causes defilement. This defilement, or sin, ruins people’s lives and it is what keeps people separated from God.

Jesus wanted everyone to know that God sees a person’s heart. He is not concerned about the food that they eat because it does not defile people. God wants people to admit that they have a sinful heart and to turn away from unbelief and self-righteousness. He wants all people to admit that they are sinners and to believe in him. Salvation and the forgiveness of sins can only be realized by God’s way. This is an important point to believe.

11. Who is Jesus?

The Jews heard Jesus teach them many times and they had seen him do many miracles. Still, they were not sure who he was. One day as Jesus and his disciples were walking along he asked his disciples a question. “Who do people say I am?” He wanted the disciples to speak their thoughts, to say whom they thought he was. The disciples gave several answers. They said, “Some of the people believe that you are John the Baptist whom King Herod has killed some time ago. Others think that you are Elijah, the prophet who lived and died many, many years ago. Still others think that you are one of the other prophets who had lived and died many years ago.”

Then Jesus asked them, “Who do you say I am?” He wanted to know their thoughts. Who

did they think he was is what he wanted to hear from them. Peter, one of the disciples, replied, “You are the Christ, the Messiah.” When Peter called him the Christ, he meant that Jesus was the one that God had promised to send. God first made this promise to Adam and Eve when they had sinned in the Garden of Eden. Later God promised that a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be the Deliverer.

The word Christ refers to the promised descendent of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Messiah is a term which means Christ. When the term Christ is used in the teaching it refers to Jesus and means that he is the one whom God promised to send to be our Deliverer. After Peter had answered Jesus, Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone about him. He wanted them to understand who he was, that he was the Christ whom God had promised to send. But at this time he told the disciples not to tell others who he was.

As you listen to the story, ask yourself whom you think Jesus is? Do you think he is the promised deliverer? Do you believe that Jesus in a human body was the promised Deliverer? God wants you to believe that Jesus was the promised deliverer. He wants you to truly believe that fact without any doubt whatsoever. The man who the disciples knew and called by the name of Jesus was the Christ that God had promised to send. He still is the Christ, the only one who can save us from our sin’s penalty. God wants you to believe in him so that he will forgive you of the guilt and penalty for being a sinner.

12. Jesus Foretold Future Events

After Peter told Jesus that he believed Jesus was the Christ, Jesus revealed to all of the disciples some terrible things that would happen to him. He wanted them to know that he already knew about the terrible things which would later happen to him. How could Jesus know what would happen to him in the future? Can any one of us speak with accuracy about what will happen tomorrow? Or the next week? Or what people will do to them? We only know what happens to us when it occurs. Jesus was God. God knows everything and so did to Jesus. The things he revealed to his disciples would later happen just as he had told them.

The disciples listened intently as Jesus told them that the Son of Man must suffer many terrible things. He would be rejected by the Jewish elders, chief priests, and the scribes. All of these Jewish leaders should have believed in him, but they did not, they hated him. Jesus told them that he would be killed but after three days he would come back to life again. He would not remain dead. Jesus knew these future events because he is God.

Do you remember the story of Jonah? When Jonah was thrown out of the ship and landed in the sea, a big fish swallowed him. How long was Jonah in the belly of that big fish?

After three days and nights the big fish spewed out Jonah. Jesus told the Jews that something which had happened to Jonah was a sign of an event which would happen to him. He meant that just as Jonah was in the belly of the big fish three days and three nights, so too he would be in his grave three days and three nights. But then, after three days and nights, he would come out of his grave and be alive again.

Hundreds of years before Jesus lived on the earth, prophets wrote about the terrible things that would happen to Jesus. How did they know what would happen to Jesus? God had shown the prophets about future events which would happen to the Deliverer and they had written them in Scriptures for everyone to read. Jesus knew about these writings. He knew that they would be fulfilled in him.

13. The Transfiguration

After this, Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone. Jesus chose these three men to be with him at this special time. As Peter, James, and John watched, the appearance of Jesus was transformed. His clothes became dazzling white, they were much whiter than anything could ever make them. Then Elijah and Moses appeared and began talking with Jesus.



Show #75: Jesus' transfiguration

When this happened, Peter excitedly said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Peter saw the dazzling glory of God shine through the body of Jesus. And he didn’t know what to say so he suggested making three shelters for them. Peter, James, and John were terrified by the things they saw. They had never seen anything like this. Jesus had a human body like we have and he was God. When his clothes radiated, his divinity was showing through his human body and that frightened the disciples.

On top of the mountain, as Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in dazzling white clothes, a cloud overshadowed them, and they heard a voice from the cloud say, “This is my dearly loved Son. Listen to him.” They fell to the ground in terror! Then Jesus touched them and said, “Get up. Do not be afraid.” Peter, James, and John heard Jesus speaking to them and looked up but only Jesus was there. Moses and Elijah had already disappeared. Then they walked down the mountain and Jesus told Peter, James, and John not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They obeyed Christ but often asked each other what he meant by “rising from the dead.”

14. The Good Shepherd

For many years, the Jews had many flocks of sheep which were tended by shepherds. They raised sheep for food and made clothing and blankets from the wool. During the daytime the shepherds would take their sheep to wide-open fields to graze on grass. Wild

animals also roamed in the fields, especially at night. These wild animals frequently tried to kill some of the sheep for food. In those days, there were robbers who stole sheep from the shepherds. Shepherds had to protect their flocks from wild animals and robbers all the time. That was their duty day and night.

Since there were natural predators and thieves in areas where the sheep were grazed, the shepherds would bring their sheep back to the sheepfold for the night. There was only one doorway for the sheepfold. Every animal or person going into or out from the sheepfold had to do so by the doorway. The shepherd would watch the sheep and protect them from wild animals or robbers who tried to get any of their sheep. Only the sheep within the sheepfold were protected by the shepherd and were safe from harm. The shepherd would lay or sit by the gate of the sheepfold to make sure all the sheep inside the sheepfold were safe.



Show #73: The sheepfold

Jesus taught the people a parable about the doorway into the sheepfold. He said that he was like the doorway into the sheepfold. Anyone going in or out of the sheepfold would do so through him. The only way into the sheepfold, the safe haven for the sheep, was through him. That means he is the only person who truly looks out for the spiritual welfare of people. Only through Jesus Christ can one be spiritually safe. Only through him can one can be made right with God and have his sins forgiven.

He also said many others have lived before he came who tried to persuade people that they were the promised Deliverer. Many others pretended to be truly interested in people to help them spiritually but they do not do so. They were false leaders who lied about their true intent. They did not tell the truth. They looked out for their own interests.

Jesus is like the doorway into the sheepfold. He's the only one who can help you with your problem of being guilty for having sinned, for being sinners. If someone tries to persuade you that someone other than Jesus can save you from the guilt and penalty of your sin, he is lying. Only Jesus is the true Deliverer. All others are false and they will tell you false messages. Do not believe what they are telling you because they are like thieves and robbers. Believe what the Bible teaches you. It is the true message from God.

All people who are saved by Jesus are like sheep inside the sheepfold. They are safe and secure because their shepherd, Jesus, guards the doorway. Just like there was only one door into the Ark, so too was there only one doorway into the sheepfold. The doorway is Jesus. God wants you to enter into his sheepfold through the doorway, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ wants you to believe in him. He wants to forgive you of your sins. He does not want you to die in your sins.

Jesus is the doorway into the sheepfold. Who is the shepherd? Jesus said that he is good Shepherd. Listen to his words, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.” That means Jesus, the Deliverer, is the good shepherd who willingly gives his life for his sheep. A person who is not a true shepherd will run away if an animal or thief tries to steal some sheep. Jesus, the true shepherd, does not do that. He does not run from danger. He gives his life for his sheep.

Jesus also taught the Jews that he is the only way, truth, and life. What does that mean? It simply means that there is no other way to be made right with God than through Jesus, the Deliverer. The Bible teaches us that a person must come to God in God’s way. What is God’s way? God’s way is to come to him through the Deliverer, Jesus Christ. He alone is the way whereby people can be made right with God. He is truth. He never lies. All who believe in him receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. That is why the most important thing you can do in this life is to believe in Jesus.

15. After the Meeting

Setting: The people were excited about all they learned about Jesus’ ministry. Jesus’ power over the natural world awed them and increased their faith in him.

Lomie: Today Teacher taught us that Jesus said whoever believes his teachings is like a wise man who built his house on a solid foundation. Our old beliefs were not built on solid foundations and they have crumbled one by one as we have learned truth from the Bible. I believe all of the Bible stories are truth from God. He wants us to believe them and I hope everyone here believes them.

Paul: As Teacher teaches us these lessons, we are like one of the four soils in the parable of the sower. Nothing was wrong with the seed or the sower. It was the soil that determined whether or not it yielded a crop. If we believe God’s Word, we are like good soil. If we believe that Jesus is our Deliverer, then we are like good soil that bears a good crop.

Lomie: Jesus did many miracles that showed his divinity. He was truly God in a human body with supernatural power. Even the storm had to obey him. The wind and the waves listened to him like we listen to our leaders when they speak. If he was not God, they would not have listened to him.

Paul: The demons also knew who he was. They knew that he had created everything and had power over everything. They feared him because they thought he might send them to the never-ending fire of punishment.

Lomie: How could Jesus feed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish? That was a very small amount of food.

Paul: Jesus was divine which meant he had the power of God. He could do miracles like that because he is God. He created everything and has the power to control it.

Lomie: Jesus was a good man. But, why did the Pharisees hate him so much?

Paul: It mattered little to the Pharisees that Jesus did many great deeds. They just hated him because they were evil and he was totally good. When he taught people, his words made sense and they were truth. When the scribes and Pharisees taught the people, they taught them many rules which they had made up. Their words were empty but Jesus' words were filled with meaning.

Lomie: When Jesus walked on water, he did something no person can do. He had to be God to do that. His divine power enabled him to do deeds which are impossible for us to do. I believe in him because he is greater than everyone.

Paul: Jesus said that he was the bread of life. That does not mean that he is bread like we eat for food, but he is the way through which we can obtain eternal life. Doesn't that excite you?

Lomie: If we believe in him, he will deliver us from the guilt and penalty of our sins. Then we will never be separated from God again. That truly excites me.

Paul: We must think clearly about who Jesus was so that we do not reject any of his teachings like the Pharisees did.

Lomie: I agree with you. The proud Pharisees were so self-righteous and spiritually blind that they did not recognize who Jesus was. We must not be like them. We must admit to God that we are sinners. We must believe in God and believe that Jesus is our Deliverer.

Paul: Jesus is the only hope for us. He is the good shepherd and wants us to trust in him always. He said he is the gate to the sheepfold which means the only way to get into his sheepfold is to trust in him. Just like Noah's ark only had one way to enter it, so too there is only one way to enter the sheepfold and that is through Jesus.

16. Review of the Lesson's Themes

Two ways to respond to God: Jesus' teaching about building on a solid rock or sand shows that people can respond to God in two ways. God requires everyone to accept the Bible's teachings and submit to them. The consequences of not doing so are dire as illustrated by the man who built his house upon the sand.

This theme of responding to God's message in two ways has been traced throughout this whole series of lessons. It is not a new concept at this time. However, it needs to be brought out again because Jesus emphasized this in his teaching.

Jesus Christ, God in a human body, is divine: This point is brought out over and over as Jesus demonstrated his power over the natural world by quieting a stormy sea, feeding five thousand people with five small loaves and two fish, walking on water, and healing a demon possessed man. All of these testify to his supremacy and divinity. **They testify to the fact that Jesus is God.** This is an important theme in this lesson.

Jesus interacted with people in such a way that it was clear to see that he loved them. This points out again an important theme: **God loves people and he wants them reconcile to himself.**

Satan is the enemy of God who relentlessly opposes him in many ways: Satan's opposition to God is manifested in history over and over again. He does his best to take away the Bible's teaching from the minds of people. This is brought out in the parable of the sower and through the opposition of the Pharisees. Satan is not the main theme in this lesson, however, he is constantly opposing God. That's why as you teach he will work to snatch away your very words from the minds of the people listening to you.

People must come to God and God's way: This important theme is brought out in this lesson. God rejected the Pharisees because they did not come to him in his way. Jesus said he is the good shepherd and the key to the sheepfold. This emphasizes again that the way to God is through Jesus, the Deliverer. There is no other way to come to God.

God loves people, is merciful, and willingly showed his favor to people: Jesus' ministry among the Jewish people clearly demonstrates God's incredible goodness. He did not have to send Jesus, the Deliverer. He sent him to save people from their sins and from eternal death.

17. Practice Telling the Bible Stories

At the end of this lesson, practice telling the story you have just heard to each other. Everyone needs to practice teaching Bible lessons by telling the stories. Tell the stories with excitement! Tell them in a culturally appropriate way that exudes your belief and confidence in them. If you are not excited about the truth taught in these lessons, how will you teach them with authority and confidence?

The Table of Contents at the beginning of the lesson lists the stories for each lesson. Practice telling the stories of this lesson in pairs. One pair should teach one of the stories in the lesson following this lesson's Table of Contents for divisions in the lessons. Some of the stories or sections of a story are short. Combine shorter sections in order to make this exercise profitable.

When you are teaching a lesson by telling the story, use culturally appropriate questions and illustrations to keep the story interesting and to make the people think about the lesson's meanings. Be prepared to engage the audience with questions which are crafted to bring out how well they understand the meaning of the story. Emphasize the important points when telling the stories.

Use visual aids or objects used in the lesson when you teach a story. Show the pictures at the right time in the story. When illustrations are used, be sure to bring them to a right and logical conclusion. If you do not make the right conclusions through telling the story, people will likely guess what it means and they could easily come to a wrong conclusion.

After you have practiced telling stories to each other, talk about ways to improve your story-telling ability. Be open to critique and be kind to each other as you work together to help each other become master story-tellers. The goal of teaching God's Word via telling Bible stories is the salvation people who need to be saved.

As you tell the stories ascertain how well you present the stories and the themes. Does your teaching tend to highlight man? Or does it focus on God working in history? Do you tell the story so that God is highlighted? Or is man, in a subtle way, the main actor in the story? Make sure that the role of God in these stories is the main focus of your teaching.

18. Teaching Tips for Teachers

General Note:

The key point when teaching this lesson is to make the proper connection and application to the audience. Carefully bring home the meaning of each point by applying it to the audiences' need. In history, Jesus performed these miracles to draw attention to his divinity and to the spiritual needs of the people. Both of these points can be understood by the audience as you carefully teach this lesson and draw them into the process of making application to themselves.

Lesson Point #3:

Emphasize that God expects everyone hearing these lessons to believe them. The parable speaks of two responses, not a third or fourth kind of a response. Stress that it is critical to make the right choice of believing the Bible's teachings for the forgiveness of sins. To reject these teachings will also have its eternal consequences which are horrible.

Lesson Point #4:

Stress the importance of being like the good soil which bore a harvest. If you know of the different kinds of soil in your area, refer to them in your illustrations. Make sure that you point out that the reason for no harvest from three soils was that they were no good or not properly prepared. The seed and the sower were the same. Stress that this message is the right one for them to believe regardless of their cultural background.

Lesson Point #5-8:

In these lesson points, Jesus performed several miracles which testify to the fact that he is God. Do not miss stressing this point. It is possible for people, especially animists, to be excited about Jesus because he has power over the natural world as well as the evil spirits but miss the point that he is divine.

Appeal to the fact that Jesus used his divine power in a right way. He wanted people to see that he was not merely another person. He wanted them to understand that he was God in a human body living among them.

If appropriate, take some bread and dried fish to the meeting and show it to the people so they can see it. Then talk about the fact that no person has power within himself to multiply a small amount of food to feed a great multitude. Make the point that Jesus, the Deliverer, has power over the creation because he is God.

Lesson Point #9:

Jesus said that he was the bread of life. When you teach this emphasize how wrong it was for the people to ask Jesus to do a miracle to prove who he was. Emphasize that this demand came from their unbelief in him. The day before, they ate bread and fish which he multiplied from five small loaves and two fish and fed five thousand people with it. This miracle alone should have been enough to make them fall down and worship him without any reservations.

Point out how wrong it was for the Jews to infer that Moses was greater than Jesus. They wrongly credited Moses with the power to feed them manna for forty years. In reality God fed them because Moses was powerless to do so. In the same way that it was wrong to follow Jesus just to get free food, it is also wrong for people to come to the meetings with the expectation of receiving free material goods for their attendance. Remember this: As the teacher you must exhort the people to believe in Jesus because he is the only way whereby people can be made right with God. Emphasize over and over the importance of having faith in God.

Please note this: Animistic people tend to find hidden meanings in parables according to their worldview and preconceived expectations. Because that is true, you need to continually emphasize that Jesus, the Deliverer, came to save people from their sins, not to enrich them with lots of material wealth. This needs to be emphasized throughout these lessons about Jesus ministry.

Lesson Point #10:

In this section, show the futility of self-righteousness. Some people may be excited about the story of Jesus and say they believe in him, but, at the same time try to do things according to their own religious belief system to make them better and more acceptable to God. Warn against this type of response. God will not accept it anymore than he accepted the self-righteousness and the good works of the Pharisees as the basis for their salvation. Be sure to emphasize this point.

Lesson Point #11-13:

By now the people have heard quite a bit about Jesus, the Deliverer. In these three points more information is given about the exact reason for his coming. In history, Jesus gradually revealed more about things which would happen to him. As you teach these lessons, emphasize the points without going to the Gospel to explain them. Why? Because you want the people to think about what you are teaching them. These points are critical to help prepare the hearts and minds to receive the Gospel message.

Notice that Jesus did not fully explain every detail about the things that would happen to him. He did however give them enough information to cause them to think about the meaning of what he told them. In the same way teach these sections so that you lead people to think about the progress of events that happened in the life of Christ.

It may be that at this point in the teaching some people will see him as such a great person that in their minds nothing bad could happen to him. After hearing about all the good things that Jesus did, it may be inconceivable to them that anything evil could happen to Jesus, the Deliverer. These points introduce what is going to happen to Christ in the very near future and help prepare the heart for the next lessons.

Lesson Point #10:

Emphasize the parallel of the sheepfold and Noah's Ark. There was only one door in Noah's Ark and only one gate in the sheepfold. Point out that in the same way there is only one way to be made right with God and that is through Jesus, the Deliverer.

The people you are teaching may have lived with the idea that there is more than one valid religion in the world. Emphasize again the truth of God's word about that idea. There is only one way whereby people can be made right with God. It is very important for everyone to believe in Jesus, the Deliverer, regardless of what they have been taught in the past. God requires everyone to believe in him and to believe in Jesus, the Deliverer.

19. To the Honorable Teacher

If any part of this lesson is misunderstood, go over that part again. Play that part of the lesson again. Summarize that part briefly for the students then play that part a second time. Then ask questions to ascertain whether or not this part of the lesson is now understood.

Be prepared to use proper illustrations to clarify a given lesson point. Sometimes it is helpful to use a picture and talk about what is portrayed in the picture as you teach.

Stress to the students that the important themes of this lesson must be understood before proceeding to the next lesson.

Simple drama can be useful to make a point clearer in the people's minds. Before using drama, be sure that it is culturally appropriate to do so. If people are not accustomed to understanding simple drama, it may be best to not use it.

At this point in the teaching is more important than ever for you to mingle with the people to discover how well they understand the lessons and to what degree they are believing the message you are teaching them. It is very important at this point for you to show in an appropriate manner your sincere concern for their spiritual welfare.