

GOD'S BIG PLAN

Jesus Teaches from the Mountain

Matthew 4:25-7:29

Supporting Scriptures: Luke 6:17-49; Exodus 20:1-17; Proverbs 31:30

Lesson Goals: To remember that Jesus is God.
To see that blessedness (happiness, joy) doesn't depend on circumstances.
To see that God knows what we need and has the power to provide it.

Scripture Memory

Put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all of those things will also be given to you. Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Don't read it. Tell it as a STORY. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

The Lesson:

Let's review what we have learned so far. (Review the previous stories, focusing on the ones that specifically point to Christ's birth. Encourage more and more students to share.)

Who was it that went to meet with Jesus at night? (Nicodemus.) Who was Nicodemus? (A very important leader and teacher in Israel.) Did Nicodemus understand everything there was to know about God? (No.) What did Jesus tell Nicodemus that was hard for him to understand? (You must be born again.) What did Jesus mean by that? Do we have to be born from our moms again? (It means that we need to be born into a new life with God.) God loved us so much that He sent His One and Only Son. If we believe and trust in Jesus, we, too, can have eternal life. But is that all there is? Does living for Jesus stop there? Let's see!

READ: Matthew 4:25-5:2 (Hold your Bible open throughout the story.)

After Jesus had chosen His disciples and as people began to realize that there was something different about Him, many people began to follow Jesus wherever He went. Jesus saw the people. He didn't ignore them. So, Jesus went up on the side of a mountain, sat down, and taught them.

"You can be really and truly happy, no matter what, if your heart is pure," Jesus began. "That's what it takes to see God. When you are sad, I'll comfort you. And you're most like me when you are a peacemaker." Jesus continued, "You can be really and truly happy when people make fun of you and hurt you because of Me, when they tell all kinds of evil lies about you. Be glad; you will have a big reward in heaven." Then Jesus said, "You are salt and light. The world should be different and better because you are in it, just like salt makes things taste good and light helps you see."

Jesus explained, "I didn't come to take away rules like the Ten Commandments. I came so that you could really understand those rules. You have heard, 'Don't kill.' or 'Don't commit murder.' but I'm telling you not to even be angry with anyone. You have heard, 'Don't commit adultery.' but I'm telling you not to even look at a woman the wrong way. You have heard, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' but I'm telling you that when someone hits you, turn and let them hit the other cheek. Don't live for getting back at anyone. And you have heard, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' but I'm telling you to love your enemies. Pray for the people who hurt you. Now that you are following me, be perfect and holy, just like your Father in heaven is perfect and holy."

Jesus had more to say. “Don’t just pretend to be perfect and holy. When you help others, don’t do it to be seen and don’t announce it. Don’t draw attention to yourself. When you pray, don’t stand and pray on a street corner. Go into your room, close the door and talk to Me. But don’t keep on talking just to talk. God already knows what you need before you ask it. This is how you ask God for things. ‘God, my Father, I want you to get all the attention. I want to do only what you want me to do. You already know what I need, so I ask you to give me what I need for today. Forgive me for when I’ve disobeyed you just like I’ve forgiven the people who have treated me badly. Keep me from sinning when I am tempted and keep me safe from the devil.’”

After teaching the people to pray, knowing that God already knows what we need, Jesus kept teaching. “Don’t put away riches for yourself. Your riches can be destroyed or stolen. Instead, put away riches in heaven by doing what God wants you to. Your heart will be tied up wherever your riches are. Don’t worry. Don’t worry about what you will eat or what you will wear. There is more to life than eating and there are more important things for the body than clothes. Look at the birds. They don’t plant and gather crops to store in barns. God feeds them. You are worth more to Him than the birds. Look at the lilies. They don’t work to make clothing for themselves, but not even King Solomon with all his riches was dressed as well as they are. They’re beautiful! And if God makes grass and flowers so beautiful knowing they will quickly die, He’ll dress you even better! Don’t worry. God knows what you need. Instead, put God first in your life. Do what He wants you to do. And then He’ll give you all the rest.”

Then Jesus warned, “Watch out for people teaching the wrong thing. They pretend to care for you, but they just mess things up. You can tell what they’re really like, not by what they say, but by what they do. Not everyone who says they belong to Me really does. Those who do what God wants belong to Him. Everyone who hears and obeys is like a wise man. He builds his house on the rock and when the storms come, his house is okay. But everyone who hears and does not obey is like a foolish man. He builds his house on the sand and when the storms come, the house is destroyed.”

When Jesus finished teaching, the crowds were amazed because He didn’t speak like their teachers of the law. Jesus taught like someone who had authority! When Jesus came down from the mountain, many people were still following Him.

Review:

Let’s review what you have learned. Who would like to retell the story? (Ask your group if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

Did you see from the story that “being born again” isn’t all there is to following Jesus? Jesus shared lots of things with the people as He taught them from the mountainside. Following Jesus means walking with Him when things are good and bad. It means doing all things well. It means knowing how to talk to God. It also means trusting God for the things we need. If you add all of those things up together, you’ll find that what we think and feel in our hearts is very important. In fact, what we think about and hold onto in our hearts comes out in what we do. It’s who we really are, even if no one around us knows, but God always knows.

So, the first step to a wonderful life is to follow Jesus. Trust Him with your life. Believe that He is God’s Son, sent to die in your place and for your sin. The second step is to keep your heart right with God. You should trust Him in hard times and good. You should be careful what you think about. And you should be obedient when you know what God wants you to do .

Planning for Next Week
Lesson 34 • Jesus Has Power over Demons
Matthew 8-9

PRESCHOOL LESSON

SING: “The Wise Man/Foolish Man”

SHARE: After Jesus had chosen His disciples and as people began to realize that there was something different about Him, many people began to follow Jesus wherever He went. Jesus saw the people. He didn't ignore them. So, Jesus went up on the side of a mountain, sat down, and taught them.

Jesus warned the crowd, “Watch out for people who try to teach you the wrong thing. They pretend to care for you, but they just mess things up. You can tell what they're really like, not by what they say, but by what they do. Not everyone who says they belong to Me really does. The one who belongs to me does what God wants him to do.”

Jesus told a little story to explain. “Everyone who hears my words and obeys is like a wise man. The wise man builds his house on the rock. *(Pound your fists together as if hammering.)* The rains come down. *(Have all preschoolers snap or pat their hands on their legs, mimicking the sound of rain.)* The water rise up in a flood. *(Have all preschoolers snap or pat their hands on their legs even faster.)* The winds blow really hard and beat against the house. *(Have everyone blow air from their mouths like the wind.)* But the house doesn't fall. It was built on the rock.”

“But everyone who hears my words and does not obey is like a foolish man. The foolish man builds his house on the sand. The rains come down. *(Have all preschoolers snap or pat their hands on their legs, mimicking the sound of rain.)* The water rise up in a flood. *(Have all preschoolers snap or pat their hands on their legs even faster.)* The winds blow really hard and beat against the house. *(Have everyone blow air from their mouths like the wind.)* And the house is destroyed. It falls with a loud crash!” *(Slap hands together, making crashing noises.)*

Which house would you like to be like, the house that stands during the storm or the one that falls down? If you want to be like the house that stands, there is something you must do. When you hear God's word being taught, LISTEN. But don't just listen; you must OBEY!

PRAY: Thank you, God, for telling me what is right and wrong. Help me to obey you.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - On three separate pieces of paper, print each part of the verse. 1) Put God's kingdom first. 2) Do what he wants you to do. 3) Then all of those things will also be given to you. Mix them up and practice putting the verse in the right order. Discuss with your students that getting things in order is last in order. God wants us to want Him and to obey Him.
- Decorate your area with scenes from the Sermon on the Mount. Assign each student one of the following; "The Be-Attitudes" (Matthew 5:3-11), "Salt and Light" (Matthew 5:13-16), "New Rules" (Matthew 5:17-48), "Lord's Prayer" (Matthew 6:5-15), "Don't . . . Instead . . ." (Matthew 6:19-34), "Ask, Seek, Knock" (Matthew 7:7-12), "Hear and Obey" (Matthew 7:15-29). Encourage them to read the passage and illustrate it.
- Make birds and lilies. This can be done with origami or as paper bag puppets. Flowers can also be made from tissue paper. While crafting the birds and lilies, talk about how God knows what we need. If He feeds the birds and makes the lilies so beautiful, how much more will He do for us!
- Make a Lord's Prayer wall hanging. On small squares of colored paper, write a part of the Lord's Prayer. Attach the squares, in order, to a long piece of ribbon.
- Make a Prayer Box. Cover an empty tissue box with craft paper or gift wrap. Provide paper and pencils, encouraging your students to share their prayer requests. Assure them that you will be faithful to pray for them. Encourage them to pray as well.
- Sing songs to reinforce the lesson. Suggestions include, "This Little Light of Mine," "Seek Ye First," and "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man."
- Talk a little more about being "salt." Taste foods that are salty and unsalted. For example, salted and unsalted crackers, popcorn, potato chips, etc.
- Make lighthouse crafts. Talk about how believers are light shining in dark and dangerous places.
- Make a "Lord's Prayer Puzzle." Write the Lord's Prayer on construction paper or poster board. Cut into puzzle shapes and practice memorizing the prayer as you put the puzzle back together.