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Bible Lesson 21 (BTJ)

1. Introduction

This lesson covers quite a bit of material and a number of short stories from the life of Christ. These stories about the ministry of Christ should captivate the minds of the people. All throughout this lesson, it is pointed out that Jesus is divine. This needs to be understood by the people. He was not merely one religious leader among many. He is the only way whereby sinners can be reconciled to God and forgiven of their sins.

In the beginning of this lesson are the parables of the lost sheep in the lost coin. These parables provide good opportunities to talk about the fact that God is seeking them. It is good to make application of these parables to their present contexts. God sent you to the people so they could learn about him and be saved.

In this lesson the contrast of living for today is compared to living for eternity. The story of the rich man and Lazarus and the story about the rich young ruler clearly show that living for today is not right. Both stories demonstrate that God wants people to think about eternity. Anyone not reconciled to God will spend eternity separated from him and no amount of material wealth can help anyone in eternity.

The miracles in this lesson are Jesus resurrected Lazarus and he healed blind Bartimaeus. Both of these miracles are pronounced evidence of his divinity. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead he showed his authority and power over death. Again this proves his divinity. This is a major point: A person can only be saved from the penalty of sin by the one who has the power over death which is the penalty for sin.

This lesson also teaches how important it is for people to believe in Jesus. It teaches the importance of being willing to admit spiritual neediness in contrast to self-righteousness. The scribes and Pharisees were condemned by Christ because they thought they were so good that God accepted them as they were. The right response to this teaching is to reject any self-righteousness and to humble oneself before God and admit that God's mercy and grace is needed. The forgiveness of sins is needed.

2. Review

Setting: Martin went to Teacher's house to talk to him about the teaching.

Martin: I have been thinking about the wise man and the foolish man. Jesus said someone who believes his teachings is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock.

Teacher: Are you like the wise man?

Martin: I believe what you have taught us about Jesus. I believe Jesus is our Deliverer. I believe in him. I believe the miracles happened just like you have taught us. I believe Jesus was God in a human body and that he is the one God promised to send.

Teacher: I'm glad you believe the Bible stories. Jesus also said that someone who did not believe his teachings was like a foolish man. He built his house upon the sand and it crashed. Do you have any thoughts about that?

Martin: This is a serious point that we have talked about. We talk to each other all the time to find out how well we are understanding and believing this new teaching. We know that we must accept it and believe it.

Teacher: Jesus taught a parable about a man who sowed good seed on four kinds of soil. Only one of the soils bore any harvest. Which kind of soil are you?

Martin: When you taught us that parable, I understood it. Sometimes in the teaching I find myself thinking about something else for a few minutes. I know that I must try very hard to listen and understand the lessons or I will be like the three soils that yielded no harvest.

Teacher: I'm glad you understand that you have to apply yourself to understanding the teaching. Let me ask you another question. Why did the evil spirits obey Jesus? How did they know him?

Martin: The evil spirits knew Jesus because they existed in his presence in heaven when they were still good angels. He created them and he has power and authority over them. He has power over all of his creation.

Teacher: Why did Jesus do miracles like feeding five thousand people with five small loaves of barley bread and two fish?

Martin: Jesus cared for the people and wanted to satisfy their hunger. Mainly, he wanted

them to recognize that he is God. He wanted them to see his miracles and believe in him. But some of the people followed him because they wanted more food to eat. That was not a good motive for following him.

Teacher: Jesus said, I am the bread of life. What did he mean by that?

Martin: Jesus wanted people to know that whoever trusted in him would have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He was greater than Moses who they believed had provided bread for them in the wilderness. In reality God had provided the bread.

Teacher: That's right, to believe in Jesus is the most important thing a person can do. It is more important than being satisfied with food. Food helps a person for a short while then it is time to eat again. Forgiveness of sins and eternal life last forever.

Martin: Why did the scribes and Pharisees hate Jesus? Every story you teach makes me have a greater love and appreciation for him. All of us in this village love Jesus and we believe in him. We cannot understand why the scribes and the Pharisees hated him without a just cause.

Teacher: Jesus always did what was good. He did not brag about himself. He was not proud. The scribes and the Pharisees wanted others to think they were really good. I think they were jealous of Jesus. They trusted in their own goodness and did not see themselves as people who needed to have their sins forgiven. That's why they hated and opposed Jesus.

Teacher: We should go now. It is time for the meeting to start. It is good that you keep on thinking about the meanings of the Bible stories and work hard to understand them.

3. Parables: The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Jesus spent a lot of time teaching the Jews. He taught them about God and their need to turn away from wickedness and to believe in God. He wanted them to believe in him and to believe that he was the promised Deliverer. Frequently tax collectors and sinners would come to listen to Jesus as he taught the people. Jesus wanted them to turn away from their evil ways and believe in him.

The scribes and the Pharisees noticed that Jesus often associated with many of these bad people. They were disgusted that he even ate with them. They would never do that because they believed that they were better than everyone else. Jesus knew that the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees disapproved of him because he associated with and taught

these evil people. So he told them a parable about a lost sheep and the lost coin to teach them an important lesson. Listen to these two parables.

Jesus said, “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? He will leave the ninety-nine others and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it, won’t he? As soon as he finds it, he joyfully carries it home on his shoulders. When he arrives home, he calls together his friends and neighbors and says to them. ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.’ Just like the shepherd rejoices that he has found a lost sheep, in heaven there is more joy over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine sinners who are self-righteous and feel no need to repent!”

What does this parable teach us? It teaches us that God is seeking lost people. Who are these lost people? They are people who are separated from God. They have not been born again. They need his mercy and grace shown to them. They need to admit that they are sinners and have sinned against God many times. Whenever a lost person admits that he is a sinner and trusts God’s way of salvation, he is forgiven of his sins. When this happens, there is great rejoicing in heaven because a person who was separated from God has been saved and given eternal life.

Why is there so much rejoicing in heaven over one person repenting? Why is there more rejoicing for one person who has repented than for many others who do not need to repent? Are they unimportant? No, they are not unimportant to God. God is very pleased that they have already repented and believed in him. Since they have been forgiven of their sins, there is no need for them to repent and be saved again. If they die, their spirits would be ushered into the presence of the Lord and be with him forever. When these people repented and believed in God, there was much rejoicing in heaven for them at that time.

Jesus told another parable about a lost coin. He said, “Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. What will she do? Will she just forget about it? No, she will light a lamp, sweep the entire house and search carefully until she finds it? When she finds it, she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, ‘Rejoice with me because I have found my lost coin.’ In the same way, there is much joy in heaven among God’s angels when even one sinner repents.”

Why did the woman in this parable search diligently for her lost coin? Her lost coin was a precious item which she needed. She did not want to lose something valuable. In the same way every person is valuable to God. People who are separated from God are still valuable to him. Though God knows they are sinners, separated from him, he still loves them and wants to show mercy and forgiveness to them. Though people who are

separated from God do not know how much God loves them, he still loves them and works to bring them to himself. Just as the lost coin did not know it was lost, many people do not think about their lostness. Even so God works to bring people to believe in him. That is why he sent Jesus, the Deliverer, to make it possible for people to be forgiven of their sins.

Jesus said that there is much rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents. Why is there so much rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents? It is because a sinner, separated from God and without eternal life, has believed in God, trusted in God, and been saved by God. This means that the person who would have been eternally separated from God in the never-ending fire of punishment now has eternal life because God saved him.

Jesus wanted these parables to open the hardened hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. He wanted them to admit that they were sinful and self-righteous. He wanted them to believe in God. He wanted them to believe that he was the promised Deliverer. He wanted them to trust him to save them. He did not want them to die in their sins and go to the never-ending fire of punishment. He wanted them to fully understand that unless they repented of their self-righteousness, they would die in their sins and go to the place of the never-ending fire of punishment.

4. The Rich Man and Lazarus

Some of the Jews were rich people. They liked their riches and were proud because they were wealthy. They trusted in their riches and thought they were better than other people. They did not think that they were spiritually needy people. Abraham, was also a rich man. However, he did not trust in his riches. He believed God and trusted all that God spoke to him. Abraham was a good man before God.

Jesus told a true story about two men, their lives, their deaths and where they went after they died. The first man was very rich and he lived in luxury with the finest clothes and the best foods. His property had a fence around it with a gate. Anyone who wanted to come and see him had to walk through that gate. At the gate lay a very poor man whose body was covered with sores. He was so poor he had very little food to eat. As he laid at the gate, he longed to eat the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Just the crumbs, that's all he was longing for.

But, the rich man took no account of him. He did not show mercy to Lazarus nor did he help him in any way. Day after day Lazarus suffered. He had no food and no one treated his sores. Some dogs would come to him and lick out his open sores. That's the only comfort he received from anyone. Lazarus needed help but the rich man had no time to

help him. He had more important things to do. Lazarus believed in God and trusted God to take care of him. Lazarus admitted that he was a sinner who needed God's mercy, grace and the forgiveness of sins.

One day Lazarus died. What happened to him? Where did his spirit go? When Lazarus died, God's angels carried his spirit to heaven to be with Abraham. Now his suffering was over. No longer would he long for the crumbs from the rich man's table. No longer would the dogs come and lick at his sores.



Show #79: The rich man in torment ... Lazarus with Abraham in paradise

Then the rich man died. What happened to him? Where did his spirit go? Listen carefully: When the rich man died his spirit went to the place of the dead who are separated from God. When he was still alive he had no time for God as he lived for himself. He lived his life being separated from God. When he died his spirit went to the place of torment. There he was in extreme torment separated from God forever. Then he looked and saw Abraham in the far distance in paradise with Lazarus at his side.

Then the rich man shouted to Abraham and begged him for mercy. "Father Abraham, please have mercy on me. Please send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in awful agony in this flame." The rich man who had never showed any mercy to poor, suffering Lazarus was writhing in pain and begging for mercy. Do you think it was possible for Lazarus to show mercy to the rich man in agony? No, it was not possible for Lazarus to go to the rich man in agony. Lazarus was in the presence of God and the suffering rich man was in the never-ending fire of punishment. There is a great chasm between heaven and the place where the wicked dead go. It is not possible to travel back and forth from one place to the other. The rich man will be tormented forever because he did not believe in God. He did not trust God to help him with his sin problem when he was still alive on earth.

The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his family. Why did the rich man want Lazarus to go to his family? The rich man thought about his five brothers who were still living on the earth. He knew that they did not believe in God or serve God. He knew that

they were living for themselves just as he did. He wanted them to repent and believe in God before they died and arrived in the awful place where he was. He thought if someone from the dead went and preached to them, they would admit that they were sinners and believe in God. Do you think that is true? Do you think they would have listened to someone who rose from the dead telling them to repent from their wicked living?

Listen carefully to Abraham's reply. Abraham told the rich man that his brothers had the law and the prophets available to them to read. If they refused to listen to what Moses and the prophets wrote, they would also refuse to listen to someone who had risen from the dead.

Think about the meaning of Abraham's reply. The testimony of Moses and the prophets is the Scripture which God gave the prophets to write. If they did not read and believe the Scriptures, they would also not listen to the message of a person who came back to life again. Abraham's reply teaches us that it is very important to believe what the Bible teaches. It is God's message to us which shows us how we can be made right with God and have our sins forgiven. If you think, "I would believe the Bible's teachings if an important person taught it to me," then you are deceiving yourself. Do not play games with God. It is important that you believe the Bible's teachings because they come from God and there is no greater message than God's.

Jesus told this true story so that everyone would be willing to admit their need for God's mercy, grace and forgiveness of sins. If anyone here is self-righteous and proud like the scribes and Pharisees, God will not forgive you of your sins. However, if you submit to the Bible's teachings and believe in God, if you trust all that his word teaches, he will be merciful and gracious to you. He will gladly save you from the guilt and penalty of your sins and give you eternal life.

5. The Tax Collector and the Pharisee

One day Jesus told some Jews, who were very self-righteous, a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector. These Jews thought that they were better than other people. In fact, they looked at other people with contempt because they thought they were not very good people. Jesus wanted them to learn an important truth which applied to them. He wanted them to see themselves as God saw them, needy sinners. But these people did not see themselves as needy sinners. They thought that they were much better than other people. They believed their good deeds caused God to approve of them over other people.

Jesus said, "Two men went to the Temple to pray to God. One of them was a Pharisee, and the other one was a despised tax collector." The Pharisee thought that he was a good

man. He thought that God looked upon him with greater favor than other people. The tax collector, however, knew that he was not a good man. He did not try to hide his neediness and pretend to be a good person.

While they were praying in the temple, the Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, “I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. I don’t cheat, I don’t sin like others do, and I don’t commit adultery. I’m certainly not like that tax collector over there! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.” The Pharisee talked about all the good things that he did to impress God. He truly believed that God was impressed with his good deeds. He liked hearing his own words about how good he was before God and other people. He really believed that he was a much better person than others and didn’t sin like tax collectors.



Show #72: The proud Pharisees

The tax collector stood at a distance. He knew that he was not a good man and he didn’t dare to lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. No, he beat his chest in sorrow and said, “O God, please be merciful to me, for I am a bad sinner. I need your mercy and grace. Please be merciful to me and forgive me of my sins.” The tax collector readily admitted that he had often sinned against God. He knew that he was a guilty sinner who deserved death. He did not try to hide his guilt and sinfulness.

Let’s talk about this: Whose prayer did God here? Which of these two men was justified before God? Was it the self-righteous Pharisee or the tax collector who called himself a sinner? Jesus said, “The tax collector returned to his home justified before God.” The Pharisee, however, was not justified before God. Why not? Didn’t he pray to God?

The self-righteous Pharisee pray to God but his prayer was all about himself, about his own good deeds. He reminded God that he was better than other people. He did not ask God for mercy and grace like the spiritually needy tax collector because he thought his good deeds guaranteed that God was pleased with him.

The tax collector did not pray to God like the self-righteous Pharisee did. He merely humbled himself before God and admitted that he was a sinner who needed God’s mercy

and grace. The tax collector agreed with God that he deserved to die for his sinfulness. He agreed that sin's payment is death and he deserved to die. That is why he came to God and spoke the truth to him that he needed mercy and grace from God. The Pharisee thought all the good works that he did had made him right before God. But, they didn't. Unlike the tax collector who was forgiven of his sins, the self-righteous Pharisee remained guilty before God for his sins.

Today, God wants all of us to think about our own hearts. Are we like the Pharisee who thought his own good works made him right before God? If we are like him, God will not show us his mercy. If we humble ourselves and admit to God that we are sinners, God will be merciful to us and he will show favor to us. He wants everyone to admit that they are sinners in need of his mercy and grace and the forgiveness of sins.

6. Jesus Resurrects Lazarus

Many of the Jews who were ordinary people liked Jesus. One of Jesus' friends was a man named Lazarus. This is not the same Lazarus who had laid at the rich man's gate and died. This man, Lazarus, lived in Bethany with his sisters Mary and Martha.

One day Lazarus was very sick so the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him about Lazarus sickness. They wanted Jesus to come and heal Lazarus. They believed in him and they knew that he had the power to show mercy and favor to their brother Lazarus who is Jesus' friend.

When Jesus heard the news that his friend Lazarus was very sick he said to those around him, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. He is sick for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." Jesus said this because he knew what was going to happen to Lazarus even though he was a long day's journey from Bethany where Lazarus lived. He knew what would happen to Lazarus.

Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus because they were his friends. However, he did not immediately go to Bethany to be with them. He stayed where he was for the next two days then he decided it was time to go to see Lazarus. He knew that Lazarus' sickness was for the purpose of glorifying himself, the Son of God. He knew everything about Lazarus being sick from its beginning to the end of it because he is God.

When Jesus told his disciples that he was going to go see Lazarus they objected. They said, "Rabbi, just a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going back there again?" They were concerned for the safety and welfare of Jesus. They were afraid angry people would try to kill him. By now Jewish religious leaders hated him

so much that they wanted to get rid of him.

But Jesus replied to them and said, “There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light.” Jesus wanted his disciples to know that he was not afraid of his enemies harming him. Jesus knew that God did not want him to die at this time. Jesus knew everything because he was God.

Then Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus, his friend, had fallen asleep and he was going to go and awaken him. When Jesus said that Lazarus had fallen asleep, the disciples did not understand that Jesus was letting them know that Lazarus had already died. So he told them, “Lazarus is dead.” Now they knew that Lazarus had died because of his sickness. Jesus also told the disciples that he was glad that he had not been in Bethany with Lazarus for their sakes. Jesus knew that once he got to Bethany he was going to do something extraordinary that would strengthen the faith of the disciples.

When Jesus and his disciples arrived at Bethany, they told him that Lazarus had died and had already been in the grave for four days. Mary and Martha were grieving very much because their beloved brother, Lazarus, had died. Many people came to sympathize with them and to console them during this time.

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, Martha lamented to Jesus about the fact that he had not been there before Lazarus had died. “If you would have been here, you could have healed him,” she said to Jesus. Martha believed in Jesus and knew that if he been there he would have healed her brother Lazarus. Then Jesus told her that Lazarus would rise up again and be alive. Martha thought Jesus was speaking about the resurrection of the end times. She did not fully understand what Jesus meant.

Then Jesus told her an important truth. He said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” Jesus wanted Martha to understand that anyone who believes in him will never be separated from God. People who believe in him and trust him to be their Deliverer will have their sins forgiven by God. And they will have eternal life given to them because they believe in the Deliverer. They will never be separated from God as the punishment for their sins.

Martha said to Jesus that she had always believed that he was the Messiah. He was the one whom God had promised to send, the son of God, the Deliverer. She said she believed that God sent him into the world. Even though Martha was grieving for her brother, Lazarus, she had faith in Jesus which gave her hope during this hard time. She

believed in the resurrection, that God would sometime resurrect people who had died and they would be alive again.

Many other people were weeping and grieving with Mary and Martha because their brother Lazarus had died. Then Jesus asked them, “Where have you put him?” The people told him to come and see where they had laid the body of Lazarus. Then Jesus, moved with compassion and love for all the people, wept.

Jesus wept because he was sad to see the heartaches of people because of sin and death. Jesus had compassion for the people because they suffered because of the consequences of sin.



Show #74: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead

Do you think God likes to see people suffer because of the consequences of sin? No, God is sorry for people because they suffer and have heartaches because they have sinned. Sin and death came into the world because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and choose to sin against God. That is why everyone is a sinner and has to die a physical death.

When Jesus wept because of the death of Lazarus, everyone knew that he felt pain and heartache because his friend had died. This shows us that God cares for people when they hurt. Jesus cares for people and wants them to believe in him and be saved by him. He does not want people to die in their sins. He cares very much for everyone and wants everyone to believe in him for the forgiveness of sins.

Some of the Jews who were with Mary and Martha during that time questioned why Jesus did not keep Lazarus from dying. They thought since Jesus healed many people he should have healed Lazarus before he died. Everyone was so sad that Lazarus had died.

When Jesus and others who followed along arrived at the tomb where they had buried Lazarus, he told them to roll away the stone that covered the entrance. But Martha protested and said, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.” Jesus reminded her that he said she would see God’s glory through this if she believed. So the people obeyed Jesus command and rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing

me. You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.”

Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” Then Lazarus came out of the tomb. His hands and feet were still tightly bound in graveclothes and his face was wrapped in a head cloth. Even though he was bound and could not walk or move as people normally do, he immediately came outside of the tomb. The power of God through Jesus’ command resurrected him and he was alive again. What awesome power! By his spoken command, Lazarus, a dead man, instantly was alive again!

Then Jesus told the people to loosen Lazarus. “Take off all of his grave clothes,” commanded Jesus, because Lazarus was alive. He could walk, talk, and eat food and drink water. He was not dead! He had been made alive again by the power of God through the command of Christ. By performing this miracle of resurrecting Lazarus to life, Jesus demonstrated that he had the power over death. This miracle was witnessed by many people and all of them were astounded at Christ’s power over death.

Do you think the Jews, who witnessed this miracle, believed in Jesus? Many of the Jews who saw this miracle believed in Jesus. They believed he was the promised one, the Messiah. They knew that no one could do what they had just observed unless he was God. They believed in Jesus because he had proven by this miracle that he had power over death. Only God has power over death so they knew that Jesus was more than a mere man. They knew he was divine.

The religious leaders of the Jews , however, refused to believe in Jesus even though they saw this miracle. They hardened their hearts against clear evidence that Jesus was God in a human body. They intentionally refused to acknowledge the truth which they saw with their own eyes. They knew that only God had the power over death but they refused to credit that power to Jesus. They saw the power of God resurrect Lazarus yet they refused to believe in Jesus. Their stubborn hearts were hardened against Jesus. They were jealous of him. They did not like it that many people believed in him. They hated him for no justifiable reason at all.

The scribes, priests, and the Pharisees wanted to remain in positions of religious leadership among the Jews. They feared that the people would make Jesus their king. If that happened, the Romans who controlled the land would be very angry with them. So from that time on the Jewish religious leaders planned to kill Jesus. They hated him without a just cause and were determined to kill him.

The scribes, priests, and the Pharisees were the religious leaders of the Jews. Did they serve God? No, they did not serve God. They were instruments of unrighteousness

following the temptations and leading of Satan. They were wicked people who followed Satan's control over them. They trusted in their own ways and believed that they were not sinners like other people.

As you listened to this story, are you like the people who believed in Jesus or are you like the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees? God wants you to believe this story because it is true. By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus showed that he has power over death. No human being has the power to bring a dead person back to life. Only God can do that. Since Jesus also did that it proves to us that he is God and he is divine.

It is very important for you to believe that Jesus, the Deliverer, is the one that God sent to help people with their sin problem. If you believe in him, you'll not be disappointed. He will show mercy to you, forgive you of your sins, and give you eternal life.

7. Jesus Blessed the Children

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to touch and bless their children. When the disciples saw this, they scolded the parents for bothering him. They thought Jesus had too much to do and would not want to take the time for the children.

The disciples were wrong. Jesus wanted to show love and care for the children. When he saw that the disciples were trying to keep the parents and their children away from him he was angry with them. He told them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them!" Jesus wanted the children to see that he loved them and cared for them. Jesus knew that children can also believe in him so he wanted them to come to him. As the disciples



Show #76: Jesus loves children

watched him, he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them. Jesus wanted everyone to know that he loved children.

He told the disciples that people need to trust in him like children trust their parents. If a person does not trust God, does not believe in Jesus, the Deliverer, he will not be saved

from the guilt and penalty of his sins. God wants us to believe everything the Bible teaches us just as if we were little children. Do not be proud and resist believing the Word of God. If you resist the Word of God and remain proud about your own ways, you will not be delivered from the power of Satan, sin, and death. You will die in your sins and then go to the place of the never-ending fire of punishment.

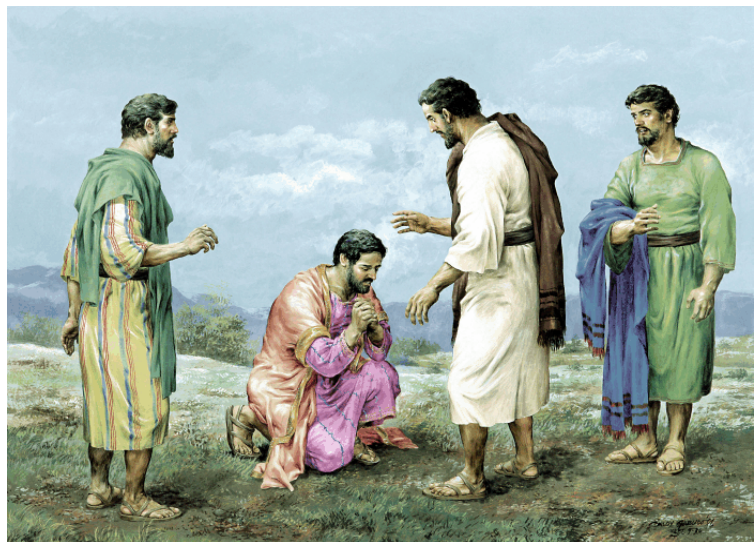
8. The Rich Young Man

9.

10. Jesus had begun his trip to Jerusalem when a man came running up to him, knelt down before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” This young man thought that he could do something to be right with God. He thought if he did good things surely God would be pleased with him.

11.

Jesus reminded this young man that only God is truly good. Then he said to the young man, “You know the commandments which God has given to us.” Jesus wanted the young man to realize that God had already given the Ten Commandments and his laws to the Jewish people to show them of their need for his mercy and grace. Jesus wanted the young man to realize that he needed God’s mercy and grace because he had not fully obeyed the Ten Commandments.



Show #77: A rich man came to Jesus

Since God only accepts those who come to him by his way, there was nothing this young man could do on his own, to cause God to accept him. Jesus wanted this young man to admit that he was a sinner and deserved to die. He did not want this young man to try to work out a way to make himself right before God. If he did that, he would die in his sins instead of being forgiven by God.

When Jesus reminded him of the Ten Commandments, he should have understood that he was not good enough to please God. Jesus mentioned some of the Ten Commandments to cause this young man to recognize that he was not totally good. Why did Jesus want this young man to admit that he had sinned? Jesus wanted him to admit that he had not lived a perfect life. No one lives perfectly. Everyone sins against God whether we want to or not.

That is why everyone needs God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness.

This young man heard what Jesus said and replied to him saying, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young." Jesus looked at this young man with compassion and told him he still needed to do one thing. He told the young rich man that he should sell all of his possessions and give the money to the poor so that he would have treasure in heaven. He told him to do this and then follow him as one of his disciples. What do you think this rich young man did?

This young rich man heard Jesus' reply and was very disappointed and very sad because he had many possessions. He loved his earthly possessions and riches. Jesus knew that he loved his riches more than he loved the people. Jesus knew that this young man loved his possessions more than he loved him.

When Jesus told the rich young man to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor he wanted this man to see his neediness. This rich young man did not love other people as God loves them. Jesus wanted this rich young man to recognize that he had not fully followed God's commands because he loved his possessions more than he loved God. Does God accept someone who loves possessions more than him? No, God cannot accept someone who loves his possessions more than him.

This young man acted like Cain, didn't he? He wanted to come to God on his own terms like Cain did. When God spoke to Cain about his bad ways, did Cain agree with him? Or did he follow his own way? Cain did not listen to God. The rich young man did not listen to God either. He thought he was good enough because he had many possessions.

The rich young man chose to ignore what Jesus said to him. Although he wanted eternal life, he refused to admit that he was a needy sinner. He did not want to admit that he loved his money and possessions more than God. God wanted him to change. God wanted him to admit that he was a sinner in need of his mercy and grace. The young man, however, wanted to keep these things because he loved them more than he loved God.

As you listen to this story, please do not act like the rich young man. Do not allow yourself to stay attached to something that will not last for eternity. God wants people to believe in him, to trust Jesus, our Deliverer, for the forgiveness of sins. He does not want you to die in your sins. Do not be like the rich young man who valued earthly things more than eternal life which God wanted to give him. Jesus loved this man and wanted to give him eternal life. However this young man placed greater value on his possessions than he did on having eternal life and being in the presence of God forever. That was a tragic choice. Do not be like him. Trust Jesus, our Deliverer, to save you from your sins.

12. The Conversion of Zaccheus

Jesus went to the town of Jericho, entered it and walked through the town. At Jericho lived a tax collector named Zacchaeus who was very rich. He was a short man so it was difficult for him to see Jesus as people crowded around him. Zacchaeus ran ahead of the way that Jesus was going and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road. He waited for Jesus to pass by. "I must see Jesus!" he thought.

When Jesus came by, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. Then he called him, "Zacchaeus! Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." When Zacchaeus heard Jesus call his name, he quickly climbed down the tree and took Jesus to his house. He was so excited to have Jesus as his guest. Zacchaeus believed in Jesus who came to seek and to save lost people.

When the people saw Jesus go with Zacchaeus they were greatly displeased. They grumbled at Jesus because they considered Zacchaeus to be a very bad sinner. They did not like Zacchaeus and could not understand why Jesus would go into his house.

Listen to this: Jesus came to deliver everyone who believed in him from the guilt and penalty of their sin. Whether a person was rich or poor, Jesus wanted everyone to believe in him. He wanted to save them. The people who grumbled about Jesus going to Zacchaeus' house did not think that Jesus should be with such an evil person like Zacchaeus. They did not understand that Jesus came to seek and save those who were lost, separated from God. Jesus came to save everyone because everyone needs to be saved from the penalty of their sins.

Then Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will make it right with anyone that I have cheated. I will return four times as much as I have wrongly taken from anyone." Zacchaeus knew that he had sinned against God by cheating people about their taxes. As a believer in Christ, he wanted to make restitution for his sins against others. Making restitution did not save Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus wanted to make restitution because he believed in Christ.

Then Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today, salvation has come to this home." Why did Jesus say this? Did the act of Zacchaeus making restitution save him? No, making restitution did not save Zacchaeus. Jesus said that Zacchaeus had shown himself to be a true son of Abraham because he exercised faith in Jesus in the same way that Abraham had believed in God. Jesus was pleased because he, the Son of Man, came to seek and save those who are lost. Jesus called himself the Son of Man because he being God assumed a human

body to live among people and minister to them.

Let's think about Zacchaeus: When he met Jesus he believed in him without any hesitation. Zacchaeus knew that Jesus was God and that he needed to believe in him right away. That is what he did and that is why he offered to make restitution for the things he had stolen by being a tax collector.

This short story about Zacchaeus shows us how God wants everyone to respond to him. God wants everyone to believe in him right away. He does not want people to wait and wait before they believe in him. Do you believe in God? Do you believe that Jesus is the promised Deliverer? Do you believe that the Bible stories you have been hearing are true? Do you admit that you are a sinner and need God's mercy and grace like Zacchaeus did? God wants everyone to believe in him. He wants to show mercy and grace to everyone in the same way he showed mercy and grace to Zacchaeus.

13. Jesus Healed Blind Bartimaeus

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho a large crowd followed him. As they were coming on the road a blind man, Bartimaeus sitting by the road heard that Jesus was coming. So he began to shout loudly, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" He wanted Jesus to heal him, to use his divine power to restore his sight. The people around him said, "Be quiet!" But he cried out louder than ever because he believed in Jesus and knew that he had the power to restore his eyesight.

Jesus heard Bartimaeus shouting for him and stopped. Then he told the people to tell Bartimaeus to come to him. Quickly, Bartimaeus went to Jesus. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Didn't Jesus know what Bartimaeus wanted from him? Of course Jesus knew that Bartimaeus wanted to be healed because he knows everything. However, he wanted Bartimaeus to speak his desire to be healed so that everyone would see his faith in Jesus. Then Bartimaeus told Jesus, "I want to have my sight restored again."

Jesus said to him, "Go, for your faith has healed you." When Jesus said this, right away Bartimaeus was healed. He could see clearly. Jesus performed this miracle by his divine power. Everyone who saw it should have been overwhelmed by who he was. Jesus showed his love and compassion for people by freely helping people and healing many who could not heal themselves from their physical problems. He wanted everyone to believe in him and have their sins forgiven.

Just as Bartimaeus could not help himself or make his eyes see, neither can people save themselves from their sinfulness. Everyone is a descendant of Adam, a sinner by nature. That means, everyone is separated from God by sin. Every descendant of Adam is naturally separated from God with a propensity to sin against God and others. Everyone needs to be saved by Jesus, the Deliverer. Only he is able to save people from the guilt and penalty of their sins.

14. The Triumphal Entry

After Jesus had healed blind Bartimaeus he continued on his way to Jerusalem with his disciples. He came to the small town of Bethany where he had raised Lazarus from the dead. Then he sent two of his disciples ahead of him to get a young donkey for him. He told them that they would find a young donkey that had never been ridden before. He told them to untie it and bring it to him and let any inquirers know that he had asked for it and that he would soon return it.

The two disciples left and found the colt standing in the street, tied. As they were untying it some people wanted to know what they were doing. They told

them what Jesus had said and they were given permission to take it to Jesus. Then they threw some garments on its back and Jesus sat on it and rode into Jerusalem.

When the crowd of people saw him riding the donkey, many of them spread their garments on the road ahead of him. Others spread leafy branches on the road ahead of him. As Jesus rode the donkey in the center of the procession, the people were excited and praised him. They believed he was the one whom the prophets promised that God would send to be their king. At this time the Romans ruled the Jews and the Jews desired to be set free from them. The people were very excited because they believed Jesus would be their earthly king who would set them free from Roman rule.

Most of the people who praised Jesus that day did not think about their sin problem. They believed they were okay and God would accept them for who they were. They were more concerned about their life on earth than with their problem of being a sinner. Jesus did not



Show #81: The triumphal entry of Christ in Jerusalem

come to set up an earthly kingdom. He came to set people free from the power and penalty of sin, to set them free from the power and influence of Satan in their lives, and to set them free from the guilt and penalty of their sin. Jesus came to save people from their sins, but not to set up an earthly throne at this time.

15. Jesus Condemned the Evil Jewish Religious Leaders

The Jewish religious leaders continued to oppose Jesus. They heard his teachings and saw him perform many miracles which proved his divinity. They saw him show compassion to the multitude. Jesus did not break any of God's laws. He lived a perfect and sinless life which was evident to everyone.

Jesus knew that the scribes, Pharisees, and the priests hated him without a just cause. They were not true religious leaders. They were evil, false leaders. They taught people their thinking and understandings. They wanted all of the Jews to follow and honor them. These Jewish leaders were evil. They did not obey God. They did not truly worship him. They served themselves and prided themselves in their self-righteousness.

Jesus warned the multitudes and his disciples about the wickedness of the Jewish religious leaders. He told them the Jewish leaders did not practice what they taught others to do. They said one thing, but, they lived in another way. They told the people to live in certain ways but they themselves did not do the things they taught others to do. They were hypocrites, very evil hypocrites. They laid burdens upon the Jewish people and gave them many hard rules to follow. However, they never helped anybody follow the rules they imposed upon them. They were too good to help ordinary people.

Everything that the Jewish leaders did was for showmanship. They wanted other people to think that they were very spiritual. They wanted others to think that God approved of them and that they were better than anyone else. Jesus called these Jewish religious leaders hypocrites, a term which describes them well. They preached from the writings of Moses but broke the same writings. They exhorted the people to follow what Moses had written in the Scriptures but they did not follow those same Scriptures.

Jesus said that the scribes and the Pharisees were concerned with little insignificant rules and customs. However, God was not concerned about the little insignificant rules they followed. God wanted them to worship him and love him. He wanted the scribes and Pharisees to admit that they needed his mercy, grace, and forgiveness of sins. But they were too proud and too good to make that admission. Instead they thought that they were good and right in God's eyes because they followed their own religious rules.

Do you know what Jesus thought about the way the scribes and Pharisees acted? Jesus compared the things they did to cleaning the outside of a dirty cup while leaving the inside dirty. He said, “You blind Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of robbery and self-indulgence.”

Do you know why the scribes and Pharisees were so dirty inside? They believed that by doing good things they would appear to be good people. On the inside, their thoughts were evil and impure. They thought about wicked things because they were not born again. They did not trust in God. They trusted in themselves. They thought if they appeared to be good then God was pleased with them. God was not pleased with them. God wanted them to be born again. He did not want them to continue to parade their self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

Please listen to this: God does not want you to deceive yourself like the scribes and Pharisees did. Do not think, “I will act very good when others see me then they will think that I am a good person.” Unless you are born again, you are like a dirty cup because inside of you there is much evil and wickedness. Unless you are born again, God sees you like a dirty cup. It is necessary for you to believe in God, to believe what his word teaches us, and to believe in Jesus, the Deliverer. It is necessary to agree with God that you are a sinner without a way to make yourself right with him. That is why Jesus came so that he would make it possible for people to be right with God.

16. After the Meeting

Setting: Several of the men were talking together about the Bible stories Teacher had been teaching them. They wanted to be sure they were understanding everything.

Greg: All of us are lost like the lost sheep and the lost coin. God is looking for us to believe in him isn't he?

Oren: Yes, God is looking for us. That is why he sent Teacher here to teach us the Bible stories. He wants to save us from our sins' penalty.

Greg: The very thought that God sought us and sent Teacher to us is very moving for me. All of us must believe in God and be saved. We must believe in Jesus, our Deliverer, and be saved. Then the angels in heaven will greatly rejoice because of our salvation.

Oren: The story about the rich man who did not have mercy on Lazarus should make us think because he died in his sins. He went to the never-ending fire of punishment and is still there today suffering in the awful never-ending fire of punishment. He should have believed in God when he was still alive.

Greg: All the riches in the world cannot help the rich man now. If we do not trust God, believe in our Deliverer, Jesus, to save us, we will go to that same awful place. I know that I believe everything we have been taught. I am anxiously waiting to hear the rest of the Bible stories. I want God to forgive me of my sins so that when I die I will go to be with him forever.

Oren: Some of the bad people, like the tax collector, were more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees. When the tax collector prayed in the Temple, he admitted that he was a sinner and God showed mercy to him. The Pharisee, however, bragged about how good he was and God took no account of his bragging. God wants people to admit their need for his mercy and grace.

Greg: Jesus was a very good man and he helped many people. Every time I hear about a miracle which he performed it strengthens my faith in him. When I heard how Lazarus came out of the grave after having been dead for four days, I knew without a doubt that Jesus most certainly is God. He is divine. Who has ever heard of that kind of power among us?

Oren: Jesus teachings are so meaningful. The rich young ruler who claimed to be good and follow the Ten Commandments, failed to love God more than his wealth.

Greg: That is right. We used to think about our possessions all the time. We wanted to have more things than other people. We wanted to be richer than other people.

Oren: It is very foolish to love our possessions more than God. We must love God more than our possessions. Our possessions help us when we are alive. But they cannot help us after we have died. Only God can help us so that we can be with him forever. The Deliverer, Jesus, came to make that possible for us.

Greg: Zacchaeus, a tax collector, desperately wanted to see Jesus. He knew that only Jesus could save him from the penalty of his sins.

Oren: Jesus went to his house because he was not afraid to show love to him. He wanted Zacchaeus to believe in him and be saved.

Greg: Bartimaeus, a blind man, desperately wanted Jesus to see him and show compassion to him. These men were different in some ways but alike in one important way. Both of them wanted to see Jesus and to be helped by him.

Oren: I am like that too. I want to see Jesus but he is not here in a human body.

Greg: Even though Jesus is not here with us, we are learning about him as Teacher teaches us the Bible stories.

Oren: We must believe in Jesus, that he is the true Deliverer sent to us by God. If we believe in him and trust him I know he will make us right with God and God will forgive us of our sins. I want God to forgive me and make me right with him. And, I want that for all of us.

17. **Review of the Lesson's Themes**

God truly loves people and wants to save them: This theme is very evident in the stories of the lost sheep and lost coin. God is not obligated by any human action to show mercy and grace to anyone. God loves people and wants them to be reconciled to him and have a right relationship with him.

The foolishness of living for riches: Every person's life comes to an end through death. At that point, no amount of possessions will help anyone. It is very important to live with eternity in view. Having a right relationship with God through Christ is the most important thing anyone can have while living on this earth.

Pride or humility: Pride and self-righteousness stand in the way of people admitting their sinfulness and need for God's mercy and grace. God condemns self-righteousness.

Humility and admitting one's destituteness and need for God's mercy and grace are needed for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus Christ is God: The many miracles of Christ prove his divinity. He performed miracles in context of love and concern for the people, but not to show off. Christ wanted the Jews to make the right conclusion about him, about his divinity.

Man is sinful, needs God's mercy and grace and must come to God in God's way: Characters in these stories show their sinfulness. Some admit their sinfulness. God shows mercy and grace to everyone who comes to him in his way. He shows mercy and grace to no one who tries to come to him in their own way.

Faith in God is required, not optional: God requires all people to believe in him. He expects everyone to think rightly about him, admit their need for his mercy and grace, and trust him. Knowledge about God without faith does not save anyone.

18. 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.

19. Teaching Tips for Teachers

General Note:

The stories in this lesson get to the heart of the issues of mankind. They show how God loves people and wants them to come to him on his terms. It is important to stress the futility of trying to come to God in any other way. It is possible that some people are still playing games with the teaching. Give warnings throughout the lesson that God requires people to believe in him, to believe in the Deliverer, and to admit their own spiritual neediness.

Lesson Point #3:

Emphasize to the people that God sees all of them and knows what they are thinking about the Bible stories. Stress that you are teaching them the stories because God sent you to teach them the stories. Emphasize that because God loves them he wants them to believe in him and in Jesus, the Deliverer.

Lesson Point #4:

The story of the rich man and Lazarus brings out an important point to emphasize. When a person dies, the spiritual condition that he is in, will be his eternal state. There is no undoing of that eternal state. Be sure to make this point plain. Be sure to stress that to disregard God's word in this lifetime will mean having to spend eternity in the never-ending fire of punishment. This serious and sobering point must be emphasized.

Lesson Point #5:

This story highlights the futility of self-righteousness. Emphasize that God despises self-righteousness. Be sure to challenge everyone to think critically about themselves. Emphasize that everyone needs to be honest with themselves and judge any self-righteousness to be wrong. There is no forgiveness for anyone who abides by his self-righteousness.

Emphasize that there is forgiveness for anyone who admits their spiritual neediness, like the tax collector did, that they are sinners, and without hope or a way to make right their destitute spiritual condition.

Lesson Point #6:

Jesus has power over death! This truth must be stressed. If he has power over death it is imperative that everyone trust him to save them from sins penalty which is death. This story should excite the people. Be sure to keep the focus on Jesus, God in a human body, and not on human subjectivity. Because Jesus is God he has power over everything including death.

Lesson Point #7:

Jesus loves children. Emphasize this point as you teach this section. The Bible teaching is not just for adults and important individuals in the society. It is also for children who are able to understand and respond to biblical teaching at a young age. Show how Jesus cared for the children, he loved them very much.

Lesson Point #8:

The story about the rich young man, who was a good character in many ways, shows how riches or earthly things can hinder a person from believing in Jesus, the Deliverer. Emphasize the futility of living for temporal things. No temporal things will go with anyone into the afterlife. It is better to give up temporal things in this life and obtain eternal life which does not end.

Lesson Point #9:

Jesus invited Zacchaeus to come down from the tree and then he went with him to his house. Stress that Jesus seeks sinners to repent and believe in him. Emphasize that Zacchaeus made the right decision about who Jesus was and immediately submitted to him. That's what God wants from everyone so stress this point as you teach it.

Lesson Point #10:

Bartimaeus illustrates how important it is to desire to know Jesus. He knew that he could not help himself and that Jesus could. With that knowledge, he persistently desired Jesus to show mercy to him. Emphasize that Jesus is God who is merciful and desires to help people. Jesus showed compassion for him and demonstrated his divinity by healing his eyes. Challenge the people: Do they really desire Jesus like Bartimaeus did? Or, like Zacchaeus did.

Lesson Point #11:

When Jesus entered Jerusalem many people praised him. The story is the beginning of the last events of Christ's life on earth. Point out that many who praise Jesus Christ on that day were not looking for spiritual deliverance. They wanted a political leader to lead them to freedom from Roman occupation and authorities.

Lesson Point #12:

Jesus made it plain that self-righteousness and hypocrisy were despised by God. As you teach this it is important to apply it to the people in the audience. Do it carefully, without pointing fingers at anyone. Appeal to them that it is necessary to give up any self-righteousness. Challenge everyone to think about who they really are. God wants them to trust in him and believe in Jesus, the Deliverer.

20. 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.