

Promise and Deliverance

Student Workbook

Volume 11

Level 2

Harvey De Groot

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Preface

When S.G. De Graaf wrote his four-volume series, *Promise and Deliverance*, he showed educators how to teach Bible stories from a redemptive-historical perspective. Rather than turning Bible stories into moralistic tales, De Graaf taught us how all the Bible shows God revealing himself as the God of the covenant, who is working out His redemptive plan for humanity and all of creation.

The 80 workbooks written by Harvey De Groot are meant to supplement De Graaf's work. They are divided by volume and level number: 20 volumes with four levels per volume. Workbook lessons are written at four levels so that families with students in various grades can study the same Bible stories during the week in preparation for their classes on Sunday. Prior to class, the Sunday School teacher should study the lesson in De Graaf's book. The teacher and students can go through the workbook during class.

The levels are divided according to the following grades:

- **Level One:** Grades K-1
- **Level Two:** Grades 2-3
- **Level Three:** Grades 4-6
- **Level Four:** Grades 7-8

Each volume contains 12 or 13 lessons, and each lesson has the following sections:

- **Reference:** The volume and lesson number in De Graaf's series.
- **Scripture:** The passage from Scripture on which the lesson is based.
- **Memory Verse:** A memory verse related to the lesson.
- **Lesson Truth:** A short statement to help the class focus on the main point of the lesson.
- **Lesson:** The lesson itself, which the teacher can read in class. For older grades, the teacher may opt to assign it as homework.
- **Questions:** Items to be discussed in class. For older grades, the teacher can assign these questions as homework but should also use them as a basis for class discussion. These are not the only questions that could or should be asked. Teachers should encourage students to come with their own questions as well.

This edition was written by Harvey De Groot and edited by his son Norlan De Groot.

Lesson 1
Given by God

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 1

Scripture: Matthew 1

Memory Verse: “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Lesson Truth: God gave the Lord Jesus Christ who was born of a virgin to be the Savior.

Lesson

Today we will learn the Christmas story from the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew wrote his gospel to Jewish Christians. It was very important to these Christians that the Savior was the one promised in the Old Testament. These Jews knew that God promised Abraham that in his seed all the peoples on the earth would be blessed. They knew that God had promised that David would always have a son to sit on the throne. It was for that reason that Matthew told about the generations from Abraham to Christ. It was important that these Christians knew that Jesus was a son of Abraham and a son of David.

It is also important that you and I know that God kept His covenant promise. Jesus is the promised son of Abraham who will bless all people. Christ Jesus is the son of David who remains on David’s throne forever. Christ is the head of the covenant. The Christmas story is about the Christ who restored the possession of the earth to His people. His people include those from every nation and tribe and tongue. Jesus came to bring freedom to all people. This freedom came because Jesus atoned for sin.

Matthew then told about the miracle of Jesus’ birth. This miracle was announced to two very ordinary people. There was a man in Nazareth of Galilee named Joseph. He was of the house and line of David. This man was engaged to a girl named, Mary. God had sent an angel to tell Mary that she would have a child. The child that she would have would come from the Holy Spirit. It was such a miracle that Mary could not tell anyone about it. She did not even tell Joseph. When Joseph learned that Mary was going to have a baby, he thought it was a disgrace. He thought he would quietly leave her. Then an angel spoke to Joseph in a dream. He told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. The angel also told Joseph that the baby Mary was going to have came from the Holy Spirit.

It had to be that way. The child had to be born from the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, He would have been sinful just as we are. Because He was born of the Holy Spirit, He could be the Redeemer. The angel that spoke to Joseph told him to take Mary's child as his own. He also told him that he was to name the child Jesus. The name Jesus means savior or redeemer. The angel said that Jesus would redeem His people from their sins. He would gather His people from all nations and atone for their sins.

Joseph must have had questions about the things the angel told him. But he was a man of faith. He believed Mary's baby was a gift from God. He believed that this baby was the greatest gift of his life. Joseph then did everything the angel commanded. He took Mary as his wife. He named her son Jesus.

Didn't Matthew tell the Christmas story in a wonderful way? He told us that Joseph believed the things the angel told him in a dream. We must believe the truth of the birth of Jesus in the same way. We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He is Holy because He was born of the Holy Spirit. That is the way God gave the Savior to mankind. Joseph believed that Mary's child was his Redeemer. We must also believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's covenant promise. He is the Son of Abraham, and the Son of David. He came to take away the sins of the world. He is our Redeemer!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "The book of the genealogy of _____ the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." (Matthew 1:1)
2. "Now the birth of _____ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 1:18)
3. "Then _____ her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. (Matthew 1:19)
4. "But while he thought about these things, behold, an _____ of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'" (Matthew 1:20)

5. “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name _____
for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

6. “Then _____ being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of
the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife.” (Matthew 1:24)

Lesson 2
Epiphany

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 2

Scripture: Matthew 2

Memory Verse: “And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11)

Lesson Truth: God revealed His Son to wise men from the East, while He was hidden from many in Israel.

Lesson

The Bible story today is about God appearing to man. It is a surprising story because the men God appeared to were astrologers. They were not aware of God’s covenant promises. Most likely they never heard of the God of Israel. Still God chose to make Himself known in a special way to these men from the East. He did this by putting a star in the sky for these men to find. When they saw this star, they believed it meant that a king was born in Judah. The wise men decided to follow this star.

The birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem. This was a surprise because Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. Still when it was time for Jesus to be born, Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem. Years before the prophet Micah had said that a Ruler would come from Bethlehem. It was at Bethlehem that the angels announced to the shepherds that the Savior was born. But God not only sent angels to announce the birth of Jesus, He also sent a star. It was wise men from the East who saw this star. God used this star to lead these men from the East to Bethlehem.

The wise men were certain that this star pointed to a king. They wanted to find this king. The wise men had no idea that this king was the Redeemer. They were not men of faith. Still God chose to send them to worship the King of the Jews. Because the wise men could study stars, they knew this star pointed to Judah. They traveled to Jerusalem the capital of Judah. At Jerusalem they asked King Herod where the King of the Jews was to be born. Herod did not like any questions about another king. He wanted the kingdom all to himself. Herod called for the chief priests and scribes and asked them if they knew where a king was to be born? They remembered the prophecy of Micah. So, they told Herod that a Ruler of the Jews would come from Bethlehem.

Herod was eager to have the wise men leave Jerusalem. He did not want them to talk about another king. The wise men were different men when they left Jerusalem. When they came to Jerusalem they knew about stars. When they left, they knew about the Word of God from Micah. This filled these wise men with great joy. Now they knew that the star they were following pointed to the Redeemer. When they arrived at the home of Joseph and Mary, they found the Christ Child. Immediately they fell down and worshipped Him.

Can you imagine anything so wonderful? God prepared the hearts of strangers from the East to recognize the Redeemer of the world! With hearts of faith, they gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Stargazers from the East worshipped Christ as King before many in Israel. It is sad to think, that many of the people who had heard the promises of the covenant, would reject the Christ.

When the wise men left Bethlehem, they did not go back to Herod. An angel told them in a dream to go home another way. Herod was very angry that the wise men did not come back to Jerusalem. He decided that he would make sure that no child from Bethlehem would become king. Wicked Herod had every baby boy two years old or younger put to death. Bethlehem became a town of weeping! Every mother that had a baby boy cried because her baby was killed.

Herod thought that he could ruin God's plan to bring the Savior into the world. But no one can ruin what God has planned! Before the babies were killed, God told Joseph to take Mary and the child to Egypt. Jesus had to leave His own country as an outcast. He was rejected because of our sins. Joseph and his family lived in Egypt until Herod died. Then they went back to Israel, but they did not go back to Bethlehem. They went to live in Galilee in the town of Nazareth. Everything happened just as the prophets said it would. Jesus was called a Nazarene because He came from Nazareth.

The story of the wise men is often called epiphany. Epiphany means to appear. Some folks think that the wise men appeared to Jesus at the home of Joseph and Mary. The truth is that God appeared to the wise men and brought them to worship Jesus, the King. God's miracle of grace was that He showed the Redeemer to strangers from the East. It is also a miracle of grace that He shows the Redeemer to us!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Now after Jesus was born in _____ of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the East came to Jerusalem." (Matthew 2:1)

2. “Where is He who has been born _____ of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” (Matthew 2:2)

3. “So they said to him, ‘In _____ of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet.’” (Matthew 2:5)

4. “When they saw the _____ they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.” (Matthew 2:10)

5. “When he arose, he took the young _____ and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.” (Matthew 2:14)

6. “And he came and dwelt in a city called _____, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’” (Matthew 2:23)

Lesson 3

Head of His People

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 3

Scripture: Matthew 3–4

Memory Verse: “But He answered and said, It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Matthew 4:4)

Lesson Truth: God the Father called Christ Jesus to be the Head of His people in the covenant.

Lesson

A king or a president is the head of the people. That means that he leads or governs the people. God the Father anointed Christ Jesus to be the Head of His people. He was the Head of the people in God’s covenant relationship with man. Three things in Jesus’ life show us how He was the Head of His people. They were His baptism, His anointing, and His temptation.

The baptism of Jesus took place in the Jordan River. John the Baptist baptized Jesus. John was the one who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus. When he was thirty years old, he began to preach to God’s people. He went out to the wilderness near the Jordan River. There he urged the people to repent because the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. John urged the people to repent. He warned them that only through repentance and faith, could they enter the Kingdom of heaven. John baptized many people in the Jordan River. They went into the water of the River as a sign that their sins were washed away. The old man of sin in them had died. They came out of the water as a sign that they were believers.

While John was baptizing people in the Jordan, Jesus came to be baptized. At first John did not want to baptize Jesus. He knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah. He believed that Jesus should baptize him. Then Jesus corrected John. He helped John understand that He had to be the same as His people. In order to take the sins of His people on Himself, He had to be baptized. His baptism was a sign that the perfect Son of God carried the sins of the people. Christ Jesus was their Head!

After Jesus was baptized, He came out of the Jordan River. Then a wonderful thing happened. The heavens were opened to Him. The Spirit of God came down in the form of a dove and sat on Him. While the Spirit of God was upon Him a voice from heaven

spoke. The voice said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). This was the way that Jesus was anointed to be the Head of His people. The Spirit of God would give Him power to carry the sins of God's people. Jesus heard the voice of God the Father and was obedient to that voice. Because He was obedient, He shared in the Father's love. Jesus knew that the Father gave Him the strength of the Holy Spirit to do His work of redemption.

Soon after Jesus was anointed, The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness. In the wilderness He would be tempted by the devil. Jesus had to be tempted just like Adam the first man was tempted. Adam gave in to the temptation of Satan and fell into sin. Would Christ Jesus be able to resist the devil's temptation and gain the victory over sin?

Satan tried very hard to tempt Jesus to give in to His human needs. Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. All this time he fasted. He did not have any food or drink. When Jesus was very hungry, Satan tempted Him to prove He was the Son of God. Satan said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Matt. 4:3). Even though Jesus was hungry He answered Satan, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4). Jesus chose to be obedient to the Father rather than to satisfy His hunger.

After that Satan took Jesus to a pinnacle of the temple. There he asked Jesus to throw Himself down to see if God's word was true. Satan reminded Jesus of the words from the Psalms that said, "He shall give His angels charge over you" (Ps. 91:11). The Psalms also said that the angels would carry Him so He would not dash His foot against a stone. Satan thought Jesus would give in to his temptation if he reminded Him of words from the Bible. Once again Jesus chose to be obedient to the Father. He said, "It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (Matt. 4:7).

At last Satan decided ask Jesus to worship him. He took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. Then he promised Jesus that he would give him all these kingdoms if He would worship Satan. But Jesus would not worship Satan. He wanted to claim all the kingdoms for the Father that Satan talked about. Jesus would be obedient to the Father in heaven. So He said to the devil, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve'" (Matt. 4:10). Christ Jesus did not give in to the temptations. He won the victory where Adam failed! As the Head of His people, Jesus won the victory over Satan. Because our Head was victorious, we too can win the victory over sin. We must serve the Lord in faithful obedience!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “In those days _____ came preaching in the wilderness of Judea.” (Matthew 3:1)
2. “For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet _____, saying: ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight.’” (Matthew 3:3)
3. “I indeed baptize you with water unto _____, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandal I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11)
4. Then Jesus was led up by the _____ into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” (Matthew 4:1)
5. “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you _____! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve.’” (Matthew 4:10)
6. “Then the devil left Him and behold _____ came and ministered to Him.” (Matthew 4:11)

The Reign of Grace

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 4

Scripture: Matthew 5–7

Memory Verse: “Ask and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7)

Lesson Truth: Jesus tells the people that the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of grace.

Lesson

Do you know what grace is? Grace is the love that God shows to His people when they do not deserve it. It is the love that we have not earned that God gives us. Jesus told about the Kingdom of God in His Sermon on the Mount. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of grace. The Lord told the people what a citizen of God’s Kingdom is like. He told them that such a citizen would be different from others.

Jesus said that the citizens of the Kingdom of God are those who believe in his grace. They submit in faith to His grace. These citizens know they cannot free themselves from sin, but must rely on the grace of God to forgive their sins. The Lord said that these citizens would be poor in spirit. They are poor in spirit because they know they cannot do anything to free themselves from sin. They know that they must depend on God the Father to forgive their sins. Citizens of God’s Kingdom hunger and thirst for righteousness, because they know that God will fill them. They also know that God showed His mercy to forgive their sins, so they will show mercy to others. Kingdom citizens know why God put them in this world. He put them in the world so the Spirit of Christ Jesus could live in their hearts. They want to tell everyone about this Spirit in their hearts. Then others will also praise the Father in heaven.

Christ Jesus also talked to the people about the law. He wanted them to know what the law really meant. Jesus told the people that he was not going to do away with the law. He said that He was going to fulfill it. He could only do this if He obeyed the Law perfectly. Then he taught the people that the law was more than just rules. They could only keep the law if their heart was right. The people knew the law said they should not kill anyone. But Jesus told them that hating someone is like killing them in their heart. Christ reminded them that they thought it was good to love their friends and to hate their enemies. He said that citizens of God’s Kingdom must love even their enemies.

They must do good things for those who hurt them or hate them. The law is not just keeping rules. It is having a heart that loves!

The Lord also taught the people about giving and about prayer. He warned them that they should not give their gifts just so that others would see what they did. Jesus told them that their giving should be done in secret. He told them not to pray only to be seen and heard by men. Jesus said that they should pray in their closet where they could talk to God in secret. The citizens of God's Kingdom would trust God to take care of them. They know that the goods of this world can be lost so they can't trust these riches. Jesus told them to gather up treasures in heaven. Heaven's treasures would never be lost. God will take care of those who have treasures in heaven. He will take care of them just like He takes care of the birds and the grass. Jesus then gave the people a wonderful promise. He said they should seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness. If they did, then God would give them everything else they needed.

The Kingdom citizens were also told not to judge others. Instead, they should make sure their own lives were right before God. Only those whose lives were perfect before God could judge another. Jesus also told the citizens to tell others about His Kingdom. He said if it was hard for them to do this, they could ask, and it would be given to them. They could seek and they could knock. Then they would find, and it would be opened to them. God said He would give good gifts to those who ask!

You and I must want to be citizens of God's Kingdom. Jesus promised that citizens of God's Kingdom would always be safe. They would be safe like the man who built his house on a rock. The winds and the floods could not destroy the house on the rock. It could not be destroyed because it was built on the rock of God's truth.

Do you know what happened when the people heard Jesus' sermon? They were astonished at His teaching. Why were they astonished at His teaching? They were astonished because they knew that Jesus spoke the truth. They knew He had the power to command people to obey. How can we become citizens of God's Kingdom? The only way is by God's grace! God will forgive our sins because He loves us. Then we can become citizens of His Kingdom and our lives will show it.

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Blessed are the _____ for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. 5:5)

2. “Blessed are the _____ for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matt. 5:9)

3. “You are the _____ of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Matt. 5:14)

4. “Do not think that I have come to destroy the _____ or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” (Matt.5:17)

5. “Do not lay up for yourselves _____ on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.” (Matt. 6:19)

6. “For where your _____ is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21)

Lesson 5

Power to Save

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 5

Scripture: Matthew 8:1-13

Memory Verse: “He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” (Psalm 107:20)

Lesson Truth: Jesus showed that He had the power to save when he healed the leper and the centurion’s servant.

Lesson

Today we will learn about two people who found Jesus. They were men who did not fit well with the people of Israel. One was a leper who had to live outside the community. The other was a Gentile who was a centurion. Lepers were unclean and were treated like outcasts. They had to live outside the city. If they saw anyone coming, they had to cry out that they were unclean. The other was a military man that they called a centurion. The people of Israel liked this centurion. But he was not part of the covenant that God made with Abraham. He was a Gentile. It was these two men who found that Jesus had the power to save.

Jesus was coming from the mount where He had taught the people. A crowd followed Him because they wanted to see His miracles. Then a strange thing happened. A man pushed his way through the crowd. Very likely people got out of his way because he was a leper. He was unclean. No one would touch this man or get near him. This poor man had to suffer double. First, he suffered because of his disease. Then he also suffered because he could not get near other people. This man heard Jesus speak. He saw that Jesus could heal sick people. He believed that Jesus could heal him and make him clean. That is why he pushed through the crowd.

When the leper got to Jesus he fell down and worshipped Him. He then said something that showed his faith. He said to Jesus: “Lord if You are willing, You can make me clean” (Matt. 8:2). The leper knew that Jesus could heal him. All that was necessary was that Jesus would want to heal him. Jesus then did something that surprised the crowd. He reached out and touched the leper. They may have wondered why He would touch an unclean man. But Jesus knew that He had the power to save. He could save this man from his leprosy. But He could do much more than that. Jesus could save him from his sin.

Can you imagine how the leper felt when Jesus touched him? And can you imagine how happy he was when Jesus said, “I am willing; be cleansed” (Matt. 8:3)? When Jesus said, “Be cleansed,” the leper was cleansed right then. In a moment, his leprosy was gone. In a moment, he could again commune with God. Jesus then told him to go and show himself to the priest. He had to do what the law told him to do. The priest had to make sure that his leprosy was gone. Then the priest would help him offer a sacrifice of purification. Once this was done, he could live with other people again. He could live in fellowship with God again. The leper knew that Jesus had the power to save!

Jesus then went to Capernaum. A centurion from Herod’s army lived at Capernaum. He was a good officer who helped the people of Israel. He even built a synagogue for the people. This centurion sent the elders to ask Jesus to heal his servant. His servant was paralyzed and very tormented. When Jesus heard this request, He said He would come. Then the centurion showed how humble he was. He said that he was not worthy to have Jesus come under his roof. But he was a soldier. He knew that a commander could tell his soldiers what to do. So, he said that if Jesus just spoke the word his servant would be healed. Jesus was amazed at what He heard!

The Lord told the crowd that He had not seen that kind of faith in Israel. Jesus was filled with joy. He knew that the Father would also call Gentiles to be in His Kingdom. Jesus knew that the covenant would be for both Jews and Gentiles. He said that people from the east and west would sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus then gave a serious warning to men of Israel. He said that some who think they are in the Kingdom will be cast into outer darkness. These were people who thought they were saved because they were Abraham’s seed. He warned that there would weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a warning to us as well. We must pray that the Lord will give us the faith of the leper and the centurion. This is a faith that knows that Jesus has the power to save. We must believe in Christ Jesus’ power and authority!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “And behold a _____ came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord if You are willing, You can make me clean.’” (Matt. 8:2)
2. “Then Jesus put out His hand and _____ him saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” (Matt. 8:3)

3. “Now when Jesus had entered _____ a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him.” (Matt. 8:5)
4. “The _____ answered and said, ‘Lord I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.’” (Matt. 8:8)
5. “When _____ heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed: ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel.’” (Matt. 8:10)
6. “Then Jesus said to the _____ ‘Go your way; as you have believed, so let it be done for you.’” (Matt. 8:13a)

Lesson 6

Wedding Guests

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 6

Scripture: Matthew 9:9-17

Memory Verse: “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And he said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him.” (Matthew 9:9)

Lesson Truth: Because we are believers, Christ Jesus invites us to live as His wedding guests.

Lesson

Have you ever noticed the joy and happiness at a wedding? It is a joy to see a bridegroom and bride joined together. It is that kind of joy that Jesus talked about to John’s disciples. It was that kind of joy that Matthew felt when Jesus called him to follow Him. Because Christ Jesus came to earth, you and I can also experience the joy of being wedding guests.

Christ Jesus wanted to choose twelve men to be His disciples. He would prepare them to bring the gospel story to the world. But who would Jesus choose to be His disciples? The Pharisees in Jesus’ day were surprised at Jesus’ choice. They were surprised because Jesus’ disciples were not all leaders in the synagogue. Some were fishermen and one was even a tax collector. The people in Jesus’ day hated the tax collectors. They hated them because they collected taxes for the enemies of the Jews. They were also allowed to keep tax money for themselves. This made the tax collectors rich with money from their own people. Would Jesus choose a tax collector to be one of his disciples?

That is exactly what happened. Jesus was passing through Capernaum near the tax office. There He saw a man named Matthew who was a tax collector. When Jesus saw Matthew, He knew that he should be one of His disciples. So, He said to Matthew, “Follow Me” (Matt. 9:9). Matthew was ready, and he arose and followed Jesus. Matthew knew that he did not earn the right to be a disciple. He knew that it was because of His grace that Jesus asked him to follow. Jesus showed again that His Kingdom is a Kingdom of grace. Matthew was invited to the wedding feast of the bridegroom!

Matthew believed that Jesus called him because of His grace. He wanted to share the joy of that grace with others. In order to do that he invited Jesus to a dinner at his

house. He also invited a number of other tax collectors. When the Pharisees saw that Jesus was at Matthew's house with tax collectors they were upset. They asked Jesus' disciples why He would eat with tax collectors and sinners. They thought it was necessary to earn a place in God's Kingdom. They did not understand the Kingdom of grace. Jesus then answered them with an example about a doctor.

Jesus said don't you know that only those who feel they are sick will call a doctor. Those who think they are healthy won't call a doctor. He said it works the same way with men's souls. If you think you are good enough, you don't need a Savior. Jesus said that He wanted mercy from His followers and not sacrifices. He said that He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. That is the reason He sat down with tax collectors and sinners at dinner. He would show them God's mercy!

Then some other men came to Jesus with a question. These men were the disciples of John the Baptist. They also had difficulty understanding the Kingdom of God. They asked Jesus why His disciples did not fast and mourn? They reminded Him that the Pharisees and also John's disciples fasted a lot. They thought it was necessary to fast and mourn to pay for their sins. Jesus then shared an illustration about a wedding feast with them. He told them that guests at a wedding feast do not fast and mourn when the bridegroom is with them. They rejoice because they are at the wedding feast.

John had taught his disciples to fast often to show sorrow for sin. That was necessary before Jesus came. But now that Jesus came, they should understand that their sins have been paid for. They could not believe both that it was necessary to keep the law to be saved and that they were saved by grace. To show that this was impossible Jesus used the examples of garments and wine. He said that it doesn't work to patch an old garment with unshrunk cloth. That way if you wash the patched garment the unshrunk cloth will make it tear. Also, it will not work to put new wine into old wineskins. The new wine will ferment and break the old wineskins. That is the way it is with the law and grace. Christ Jesus came to bring a Kingdom of grace. Because He brought a Kingdom of grace we can live as guests at a wedding feast. Are you filled with joy because you are a guest at the wedding feast of the Lord?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named _____ sitting at the tax office." (Matt. 9:9a)

2. “And He said to him ‘_____’ So he arose and followed Him.” (Matt. 9:9b)

3. “And when the _____ saw it, they said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’” (Matt. 9:11)

4. “When Jesus heard that, He said ‘Those who are well have no need of a _____ but those who are sick.’” (Matt. 9:12)

5. “Then the disciples of _____ came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’” (Matt. 9:14)

6. “And Jesus said to them. ‘Can the friends of the _____ mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?’” (Matt. 9:15a)

The Labor of His Soul

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 7

Scripture: Matthew 9:27–10:42

Memory Verse: “He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.” (Matthew 10:40)

Lesson Truth: Christ Jesus works from the depth of His soul for His Kingdom.

Lesson

God the Father sent Christ Jesus to do the work of the Kingdom. Jesus did this work with His heart and soul. He saw the needs of the people. He knew they were like sheep without a shepherd. It was sad that the people did not understand the work that Jesus came to do. Even worse the Pharisees slandered His work. Still Jesus worked and sent His disciples to work in His Kingdom.

Jesus worked hard in Capernaum. He preached the gospel and healed many sick people. People crowded around Him asking to be healed. But they did not understand what He really wanted to do. They did not understand that He came to bring the Kingdom of grace into their hearts. He really wanted His grace to cleanse them from sin. Instead of looking for His grace the people looked for healing for their bodies. The story of the two blind men showed how they and others misunderstood Jesus.

One day when Jesus was tired from all the work, two blind men followed Him. They called out to Jesus, “Son of David have mercy on us” (Matt. 9:27). They knew that Jesus was the Son of David, but they did not know that He came to bring grace. Jesus waited until He came into a house before He paid attention to them. He did not want the crowds to see only His miracles. He wanted them to remember that He could take away their sins. When He came into the house Jesus asked the blind men if they believed He could do what they asked. They said that they truly believed. Jesus then touched their eyes, and they could see again. Would they only think of Jesus’ miracles, or would their hearts be open to His grace?

Jesus warned the blind men not to tell anyone what happened. He wanted the people to know that He could take away their sin. He did not want them to think only about His miracles. But the blind men did not follow Jesus’ warning. They told everyone what happened. It happened just like Jesus was afraid it would. The people became all excited

about His miracle of making the blind men see. And they did not understand that His grace could take away their sin.

Later Jesus saw a man who could not speak. This man also had a demon in him. Jesus had the power over demons. So, He told the demon to leave the man. The people were amazed that even demons obeyed Jesus. But the Pharisees were against Jesus. They said that He got His power from Satan to tell the demon to leave the man. This hurt Jesus very much. He knew the people misunderstood Him and the Pharisees slandered Him. Yet His grace was even greater than misunderstanding and slander.

The Lord continued to preach and heal the sick. But as He saw the crowds, He knew they did not understand why He came. Still, He had compassion on them. Jesus knew that only His grace could save them from their sins. He saw that the people were weary and scattered. Jesus said they wander just like sheep that do not have a shepherd to guide them. Only the grace of the Lord Jesus could save His people!

Jesus then talked to His disciples about a harvest. Harvest is the task of gathering in ripe grain. But Jesus saw that there were souls that needed to be gathered in. He told His disciples that the harvest was plentiful. This meant that there were many, many souls that needed to be gathered in. It was sad that there were not enough workers to gather in the harvest. He asked His disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send workers. Then these workers could gather in the harvest of souls.

The work that needed to be done was great. Jesus sent His disciples to begin that work. He gave them power to heal people and to command unclean spirits to leave. The Lord also told them to go to the lost sheep of Israel. The gospel had to be brought to God's people Israel, before it was brought to the Gentiles. But Jesus knew the work would be very difficult. He told His disciples they would be like sheep in the middle of a pack of wolves. Jesus promised that people would hate them because of Him. He also told them not to be afraid of someone who could kill their body. Jesus said they should fear God who could destroy both their body and soul in hell! The Lord truly did work with heart and soul for His Kingdom!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then He touched their _____ saying, 'According to your faith let it be to you.'" (Matt. 9:29)

2. “As they went out, behold they brought to Him a man, mute and _____
_____.” (Matt. 9:32)
3. “Then He said to His _____ “The harvest truly is plentiful,
but the laborers are few.” (Matt. 9:37)
4. “And as you go, preach, saying, “The Kingdom of _____
is at hand.” (Matt. 10:7)
5. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of _____.
Therefore be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.” (Matt. 10:16)
6. “And you will be _____ by all for My name’s sake. But
he who endures to the end will be saved.” (Matt. 10: 22)

The Kingdom Forces its Way Through

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 8

Scripture: Matthew 11

Memory Verse: “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29)

Lesson Truth: The Kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing. Forceful men lay hold of it.

Lesson

Jesus came to bring His Kingdom of grace. Grace is the favor or gift that the Lord gave us. He gave us the forgiveness of our sins. Even though we did not do anything to deserve this forgiveness. The Kingdom of grace that Jesus brought was a New Kingdom. It took the place of the kingdom of Old Testament laws. It was hard for the people of Israel to understand the Kingdom of grace. They could not understand how a person could be free from sin without keeping laws. How could a person be forgiven just as a free gift? It was so hard for the people to understand the gift of grace. God sent John the Baptist to announce that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand. This was same as the Kingdom of grace that Jesus brought. John’s preaching forcefully advanced this Kingdom of grace. That is why the title of our lesson says that the Kingdom forces its way through. The people needed to believe in grace instead of laws.

John the Baptist made the way ready for Christ Jesus. He told the people that Jesus was the promised Messiah. But even the faithful preacher, John, had questions about Jesus. King Herod had put John in jail. In jail John heard about the miracles that Jesus did. He maybe wondered if Jesus could make the blind to see why couldn’t He get John out of jail? So John sent two of his disciples to talk to Jesus. He told them to ask Jesus if He was the promised Messiah or if the Messiah still was coming. Isn’t it amazing that a faithful preacher like John had questions about Jesus?

Jesus could have been upset with John and scolded him. But He didn’t scold John. He told John’s disciples to remind him about the things that were being done. The blind could see again. Lame people could walk again. Even dead people were made alive again. All these things the prophets said would happen when the Messiah came. John should know that Jesus was truly the Messiah.

The Lord then told the people who John really was. He said that John was not a reed shaking in the wind. He was a true prophet. The Old Testament promised that Elijah would come again. Jesus said that John was that promised Elijah. He was not Elijah that returned from the dead. No, John came with the spirit and the power of Elijah. Jesus also said that there was no one born of a woman who was greater than John. John had been given more grace than anyone else. Then Jesus added that even the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than John. Just think, Jesus knew that the least in the Kingdom of heaven would be given more grace than John was given. That is why Jesus talked about the Kingdom of grace forcing its way through to our hearts.

Jesus then had some hard things to say to the people of His day. He told them that neither John nor Jesus pleased the people of His day. They complained that John didn't eat or drink but only fasted. And they also complained that Jesus ate and drank. They accused Him of being a drunkard. How tragic that the Kingdom of grace did not get through to many of these people! They did not realize that God sent John to tell the people they could not enter the Kingdom by obeying laws. They could only enter the Kingdom by believing in the gift of grace that Jesus brought. Jesus told them that the people of Sodom would have believed if they had seen His works. But many of the people of His day would not enter the Kingdom of heaven. They would not enter the Kingdom because they did not believe in His grace!

The Lord Jesus loved the people so much. He wanted them to be part of His Kingdom of grace. He told them to that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. The people no longer had to carry the heavy yoke and burden of trying to keep all the laws. If they would only believe that Jesus came to give them the gift of grace! That would truly be an easy yoke and a light burden. Do you believe that Jesus took away your sins? Do you believe that He took your sins because of His grace? Then the Kingdom of grace is forcing its way through to your heart!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "And when _____ had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to him." (Matt. 11:2)
2. "Are _____ the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3)

3. “Jesus answered and said to them. ‘Go and tell _____
the things which you hear and see.’” (Matt. 11:4)

4. “And if you are willing to receive it, he is _____who is to
come.” (Matt. 11:14)

5. “But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of _____
in the day of judgment than for you.” (Matt. 11:24)

6. “Come to _____ all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will
give you rest.” (Matt. 11:28)

The Gospel of the Kingdom Is Like Seed

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 9

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-30

Memory Verse: “But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop; some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matthew 13:8)

Lesson Truth: The good news of the Kingdom takes root like seeds in a farmer’s field.

Lesson

Do you know how people become citizens of the Kingdom of heaven? Jesus told His disciples that it is a mystery that He would allow them to know. It is a mystery of grace. God gives His grace to some people and not to others. The Lord told a story about a farmer sowing seed to help them understand this mystery. A farmer sowing seed is very much like people becoming Kingdom citizens.

Jesus was out by the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd of people gathered around Him. In order to teach the people, He got into a boat and talked to the people on the shore. This time He talked to them by using a story. The story He used was called a parable. A parable uses everyday events to explain a spiritual meaning. In this parable Jesus said a farmer went out to sow his seed. As the farmer sowed, the seed fell into four different kinds of soil. Some of the seed fell on the walking path and could not grow on the hard path. Other seed fell on stony ground and started growing until the roots hit the stones. Still other seed fell among the weeds. It grew only until the weeds choked the good seed. Thankfully there was also seed that fell into good soil and produced a good crop. Some of this seed produced a hundred times as much as the seed that was planted. And other seed produced sixty or thirty times as much.

At first Jesus did not tell what the story meant. He wanted the people to think about the meaning. But His disciples asked Him why He talked in parables. They asked Him why He didn’t explain His parables. Jesus then told them He did this because not everyone was supposed to know the secrets of the Kingdom of heaven. Still Jesus said that the disciples would know these secrets. They would understand because they believed the words He spoke before. Then Jesus told them what the parable meant.

The farmer that sowed the seed is like Jesus who brought the good news of salvation. When Jesus shared the good news of salvation not everyone believed it. Some people

were like the seed that fell on the walking path. They heard the good news, but it did not take root and grow. Other people were like the seed that fell on stony ground. At first, they heard the good news and were excited, but soon they forgot. They were like the seed that grew until the roots hit the stones and then died. Still other people were like the seed that fell among the weeds. They heard the good news and started to grow. They grew until the cares and riches of the world choked their interest. They are like the good seed in the weeds. The weeds finally choked the good seed. How thankful we must be that Jesus also said that some of the seed fell on good soil and produced a good crop. These are the people who hear the good news of the Kingdom and believe it. They produce a good crop for the Kingdom of heaven. Some multiply the seed by a hundred, or sixty, or thirty times. People respond to God's grace in different ways. Just like seeds respond differently to growing in different kinds of soil.

Jesus then told another parable about a farmer and seed. This time the farmer sowed his seed in good soil where it would grow and produce a good crop. But at night while the farmer was sleeping an enemy came and sowed weeds among his good seeds. The servants were upset when they saw the weeds in with the grain. They told the farmer they would be willing to pull out all the weeds. But the farmer said that would not work. He said the grain would come out with the weeds when they pulled them.

The enemy that sowed the weeds in the grain is Satan. Satan will surely bring problems to the citizens of God's Kingdom. These problems will be like wheat surrounded by weeds. In the parable the farmer told the servants to wait until the harvest. At the harvest time he would tell the workmen to first gather the weeds and burn them in the fire. Then they would gather the wheat and put it in the farmer's barns. That is the way it will be in the Kingdom of heaven. The enemies of the Kingdom will be burned in the fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then God's people will enter His glory!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Then He spoke many things to them in _____ saying: behold a sower went out to sow." (Matt. 13:3)
2. "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the _____ and the birds came and devoured them." (Matt. 13:4)

3. “And some fell among _____ and the _____ sprang up and choked them.” (Matt. 13:7)

4. “But others fell on _____ and yielded a crop; some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matt. 13:8)

5. “He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the _____ of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.’” (Matt. 13:11)

6. “But _____ are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.” (Matt. 13:16)

The Kingdom Is like a Treasure

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 10

Scripture: Matthew 13:44-52

Memory Verse: “Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold.” (Proverbs 8:10)

Lesson Truth: The good news of the Kingdom is like a valuable treasure.

Lesson

Jesus continued to teach by using parables. The parables were stories about everyday things that taught a spiritual truth. He taught a number of parables to the crowds that followed Him. The parables of today’s lesson he taught to His disciples alone. Two parables are about the value of the Kingdom of heaven. And the third is about the judgment on the last day. Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that the Kingdom is more valuable than any other possession. He also wanted them to know that only those who believed in God’s grace would enter the Kingdom.

The disciples wondered about the Kingdom of heaven. How valuable is the Kingdom that Jesus talked about? In order to help His disciples understand, Jesus told them about a treasure in a field. A man found a treasure hidden in a field. He knew the treasure was very valuable. It was more valuable than all his other possessions. So, he sold all his possessions and bought that field. After he bought the field, he was the owner of the valuable treasure. Jesus said that is what the Kingdom of heaven is like! There is no possession that is equal to it. In this way Jesus encouraged His disciples. Even if they gave up all their possessions on earth to follow Him, it would be worth it! How valuable is the Kingdom of heaven to you and me? Are we ready to exchange it for all our possessions on earth?

Jesus then told them another parable about the Kingdom of heaven. He said the Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who was looking for pearls. One day this merchant found a most precious pearl. It was more valuable than any pearl he had ever seen. This merchant sold everything he had in order to buy this pearl. He was filled with joy to exchange all his possessions so he could buy the pearl. Again, Jesus said that is what the Kingdom of heaven is like. How thankful we must be that the Spirit of the Lord works in the hearts of His people. The Spirit works so that His people will

exchange all they possess in order to buy this pearl. God's people will sell all their possessions in order to be a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven!

Still Jesus warned His disciples that not everyone would be part of the Kingdom. There are those who are not willing to exchange all they possess for the Kingdom. In some ways the Kingdom attracts them, but not enough to exchange it for everything they possess. Jesus told this parable to help His disciples understand that not everyone would enter His Kingdom. Only those who relied on the grace of the Lord Jesus would be citizens of His Kingdom.

A fisherman went out with his dragnet. He threw the dragnet into the sea in order to catch fish. When the net was full of fish the fisherman pulled it into the shore. When the net was on the shore the fisherman began to sort the fish. He gathered the good fish and put them into vessels for storage. Then he threw the bad fish away. Jesus said that is the way it would be at the end of time. God's people who believed in His grace would be gathered into His Kingdom. Those who only pretended to be part of His Kingdom would be destroyed. In this parable Jesus even told what would happen to the ones destroyed. He said they would be thrown into a furnace of fire. In this furnace there would be wailing and gnashing of teeth. This warning should encourage us to long for the Kingdom treasure. It should encourage us to seek the pearl of great price. This pearl is the Kingdom of heaven!

Jesus then asked His disciples if they understood His parables. They told Him that they understood. Jesus said that if they understood they were the real scribes. They were the ones who would tell the gospel story to others. They would be so excited to tell the gospel story they would be like someone who owns a home. A person who owns a home knows where to find all the treasures of that home. The disciples would also know where to find all the treasures of the Kingdom. They would find joy in telling about these treasures over and over! Is the Kingdom of heaven our most valuable treasure?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "Again the kingdom of heaven is like _____ hidden in a field." (Matt. 13:44a)
2. "Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking a beautiful _____." (Matt. 13:45)

3. “Who when he had found one _____ of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” (Matt. 13:46)

4. “Again the kingdom of heaven is like a _____ that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind.” (Matt. 13:47)

5. “So it will be at the end of the age. The _____ will come forth; separate the wicked from among the just.” (Matt. 13:49)

6. “Jesus said to them, ‘Have you _____ all these things?’ They said to Him. ‘Yes, Lord.’” (Matt. 13:51)

Lord Over the Forces of Nature

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 11

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-33

Memory Verse: “But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying, ‘Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid!’” (Matthew 14:27)

Lesson Truth: Jesus is God who became man. Even as man, He rules the forces of nature.

Lesson

The Lord Jesus Christ became flesh. That means that God became a man. God who became man is sometimes known as the Word. Isn't it wonderful that God talks to His people by His Word? It is even more wonderful that this Word became a man. The Lord Jesus, who is the Word, has the power to rule all of nature. He is the Lord of the forces of nature. Today's lesson tells us about His power over nature.

Jesus had been told about the death and burial of John the Baptist. After that He wanted to go to a place away from the crowds. He and His disciples got into a boat and went to the other side of the lake. But the people did not want to let Jesus alone. They walked way around the lake to be with Him. Jesus saw how much they wanted to be near Him so they could be healed of their illnesses. Then He felt sorry for them and healed more of the sick people.

The people did not want to leave Jesus. Finally, the day was almost gone. Jesus' disciples wondered where the people could go for food. They came to Jesus and asked Him to send the people away so they could buy food. Instead of sending the people away, do you know what Jesus did? He told the disciples to feed the crowd of people. The disciples said that they did not have enough food to feed a crowd. They reminded Jesus that they only had five small loaves and two fish. Jesus told them to bring the five loaves and two fish to Him. Then Jesus showed that He had power over all things.

First, He told the crowd of people to sit on the grass. Then He took the loaves and fish and He blessed them. After that He told the disciples to serve the bread and fish to the people. The disciples must have been amazed at Jesus' miracle. There was enough bread and fish to feed five thousand men. The disciples also fed the women and children. After everyone had enough to eat the disciples found twelve baskets of leftovers.

Jesus then wanted to spend some time all by Himself. He told the disciples to go back to the other side of the lake. Then He went to a mountain to pray. Jesus wanted to talk to His Father in heaven. He knew He had to talk to His Father if He was to live and die for His people. Jesus also talked to His Father as the Mediator. The Mediator is the One who pleads with the Father to forgive His people.

Very early the next morning Jesus went to the disciples. They were in the middle of the lake. The disciples were afraid because they were in a huge storm. All at once they saw Jesus walking on the water toward their boat. Then they were even more afraid because they thought Jesus was a ghost. Jesus saw how afraid they were, so He said: “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid!” (Matt. 14:27). Peter answered the Lord immediately. He said, “Lord if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (Matt. 14:28). Then an amazing thing happened! Jesus said to Peter, “Come” (Matt. 14:29). Peter then walked on the water to meet Jesus. He was able to walk on the water as long as he watched Jesus. When he looked at the storm around him, he started to sink. He called out to Jesus, “Lord, save me!” (Matt. 14:30). Jesus reached out His hand and caught Peter. Then He said to Peter: “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matt. 14:31). God told us these stories in the Bible so we would always believe and never doubt. We should never doubt that God’s grace could save us!

Jesus then got into the boat with the disciples. Just then the storm stopped. The wind quit blowing and the water became quiet. Now the disciples knew that Jesus is the Lord. They knew that He had the power over all the forces of nature. Do you know what they did? They fell down and worshipped Jesus. Then they said something that we should always remember. They said, “Truly You are the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33). Yes, Jesus is the Lord!

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. “And when Jesus went out He saw a great _____ and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.” (Matt. 14:14)
2. “But _____ said to them, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” “. (Matt. 14:16)
3. “And they said to Him, “We have here only five _____ and two fish.” (Matt.14:17)

4. “And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the _____ by Himself to pray.” (Matt. 14:23a)

5. “And when they got into the _____ the wind ceased.” (Matt. 14:32)

6. Then those who were in the boat came and _____ Him, saying: “Truly, You are the Son of God.” (Matt. 14:33)

You Are the Christ

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 12

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-28

Memory Verse: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” (Matthew 16:24)

Lesson Truth: Jesus is known as the Christ, the Anointed One, to all believers.

Lesson

The Lord Jesus was recognized as the Lord over the forces of nature. Today we learn that Peter recognized Jesus as the Christ. This recognition was possible only because God the Father guided him. The other disciples agreed with Peter’s confession. Christ Jesus used this occasion to appoint the disciples to the office of apostle. As apostles, they would be given the power of their Lord. In addition to this power, they would also be called to share in Christ’s suffering.

Jesus and His disciples went to the region of Caesarea Philippi. It was in this region that they discussed what people were saying about Jesus. He asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13). They answered the Lord truthfully when they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and other Jeremiah or one of the prophets” (Matt. 16:14). The people really hoped for the return of one of the prophets. They wanted one of the prophets to bring back the power and glory of David’s kingdom. They were mistaken about how the Messiah would come.

After the disciples shared the thoughts of the people, Jesus had a question for them. He wanted to know if they understood who He was. He asked them plainly, “But who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15). Peter then answered for the disciples. He said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). The disciples saw what the people failed to see. They knew that Jesus was the Messiah. They knew that the Father in heaven sent Him. He was sent to bring grace to His people. How did the disciples know this?

When Peter made his confession, Jesus called him blessed. Jesus said he was blessed because the Father in heaven gave him this information. Peter did not learn that Jesus was the Christ from another person. He learned this from God the Father. The disciples knew that the Father gave Jesus the office of Messiah and Savior.

Jesus then gave Simon the name Peter, which means rock. We must understand that Simon had no strength in himself. But when he was given the office of apostle, he became a rock. With the power given him to be an apostle Peter would be unmovable. Then the Lord told the disciples about the power they would have as apostles. He told them they would be given the keys of the Kingdom of heaven. A key can open and close doors. The key given to the disciples was the Word of God. For anyone who heard the Word of God that the apostles brought, the Kingdom would be open. For those who rejected this Word the Kingdom would be closed.

The disciples might have been excited about their calling to be apostles. They might have been eager to carry the message that Jesus was the Christ. But they were not yet fully prepared. They still had to learn that Jesus had to walk the path of suffering. When Jesus told them that He would have to suffer they couldn't believe it. It was Peter who again spoke for the disciples. He said, "Far be it from You, Lord, this shall not happen to You!" (Matt. 16:22). This time Peter's words were not from the Father. This time Jesus spoke to Peter with strong words. He said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23). Christ Jesus could not give in to Peter's idea that He should not have to suffer. Jesus had to suffer and die to pay for the sins of His people. In order to be obedient to the Father He had to walk the path of suffering. Only this path could save His people!

The disciples also had to learn that they would take part in Christ's suffering. Jesus told them plainly that in order to follow Him they had to forget self. Jesus said they would have to deny themselves. Even more, they would have to take up a cross. That would be the way they would fellowship with Jesus in His suffering. Then Jesus pointed out that there really is no other way. He said, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it." He added that, "Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 16:25). He also told the disciples that in the Kingdom of God there is no other way. They had to live by the Lord's grace. Jesus asked the disciples: "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). Do you believe in the power of the Lord's grace? Are you ready to deny yourself so you can follow Him?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "He asked His _____ saying, 'Who do men say that I the Son of Man, am?'" (Matt. 16:13b)

2. “He said to _____ ‘But who do you say that I am?’”
(Matt. 16:15)

3. “Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the _____
the Son of the living God.’” (Matt. 16:16)

4. “And I also say to you that you are _____ and on
this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”
(Matt. 16:18)

5. “Then Jesus said to His _____, ‘If anyone desires to
come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” (Matt.
16:24)

6. “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole _____
and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt.
16:26)

The People of the Lord

Reference: De Graaf, *Promise and Deliverance*, Volume 3, Lesson 13

Scripture: Matthew 17:24–18:35

Memory Verse: “Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:4)

Lesson Truth: A fellowship of believers grows where they hear Christ’s gospel of the Kingdom.

Lesson

Not all the people who heard Jesus believed that He was the Christ. Some people rejected His teaching. How could the disciples tell who were the Lord’s people? Jesus said that His people were both Jews and Gentiles. They were the ones who believed that Jesus brought them salvation. The salvation that Jesus brought was a gift of grace. Jesus mentioned this gift when He talked about paying taxes. The Lord’s people are like those who do not need to pay taxes. They believe like a little child that salvation is a gift of grace.

Men who collected the temple tax talked to Peter. They asked him if Jesus paid this tax. Peter went to ask Jesus about paying this tax. Instead, Jesus asked Peter about taxes. He asked him if a king’s sons pay taxes or if strangers pay them. Peter said that strangers pay the taxes. Jesus said Peter was right. Sons of the king do not have to pay taxes. Jesus told Peter the Kingdom of heaven is like that.

Do you know what Jesus meant? He meant that His people do not pay to go to heaven. They go to heaven because Jesus paid for their sins. They cannot pay for their sins like paying a tax. The only way their sins can be forgiven is by grace. That is why Jesus told Peter that sons do not pay the tax.

But Jesus also told Peter that thankful sons could pay the tax. He told Peter to catch a fish. He would find tax money in the fish’s mouth. Then Peter was to pay the tax for himself and Jesus. Isn’t that a beautiful story? The story that salvation is a free gift. Yet we may do things for the Kingdom because we are thankful for our salvation.

The disciples asked Jesus a strange question. They asked Him who was the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus did not want them to think of the Kingdom heaven that way. It was wrong to think they could do things in order to be the greatest. The

Kingdom of heaven is a free gift. Jesus told them that they had to believe like a little child. They had to believe in God's gift of salvation. Otherwise, they could not enter the Kingdom of heaven.

Jesus also warned the disciples not to cause a little one to sin. He said it would be better to die in the sea than to cause a little one to sin. Jesus was not just talking about children. He was also talking about people who were humble like little children. The Lord Jesus said that those who welcome such a humble person also welcome Him.

Christ Jesus also taught the disciples how to bring back a brother who sins. He said we must talk to such a brother. We must also be ready to forgive. This made Peter ask Jesus how often we should forgive a brother. Peter thought maybe seven times. But Jesus told Peter we must forgive seventy times seven. We must do this because God has forgiven us a huge debt.

It is like a king, Jesus said, who forgave a servant a huge debt. Then that servant would not forgive a small debt that he was due. We may not be like the unforgiving servant. Because God has forgiven our huge debt, we must be ready to forgive others. God's mercy to us is without end. We must show mercy without end to others.

Who are the people of the Lord? They are like the sons who do not need to pay taxes. God's people are humble like little children. These people believe that Jesus brought the gift of salvation. And they believe that this gift is free. Jesus paid it all! Do you humbly believe like a little child?

Questions

Fill in the blanks.

1. "What do you think, _____? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?" (Matt. 17:23b)
2. "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become like little _____, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:3)
3. "Therefore whoever _____ himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:4)

4. “And if your _____ - causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire? (Matt. 18:9)

5. “Lord, how often shall my _____ sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? (Matt. 18:21b)

6. “Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to _____ times seven.’” (Matt. 18:22)