

LESSON 13

The Sermon on the Mount-The Beatitudes

MATTHEW 5:1-26



BIBLE TRUTH

BECAUSE OF CHRIST, WE CAN BE SALT AND LIGHT TO THE WORLD

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 5:1–26 from the Scriptures or read story 91, “The Sermon on the Mount—The Beatitudes,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

You Are the Light of the World

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ flashlights—one for each child (have children bring in flashlights labeled with their names but also provide extras for students who don’t bring one to class)
- ✓ large opaque bowl or pail

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

The Power of Salt

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ popcorn (unsalted)
- ✓ salt
- ✓ two large bowls
- ✓ napkins (enough for the class)

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 13—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Not an Iota, Not a Dot

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a page from a Hebrew Bible (enough copies for the whole class)
- ✓ paper and pencils

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

The character of a believer—To open his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described a meek, humble, and merciful people who thirst for righteousness. These people are peacemakers; they are gracious even in the midst of persecution and suffering. This passage describes the character of genuine Christians. In Leviticus 18:3, sometime after delivering Israel from the Egyptians, God instructed Moses to tell the people to differ from the people of Canaan. Instead of walking in the statutes of the pagans, Israel was to follow God’s rules and God’s ways. Of course, for the most part, Israel drifted from faithfulness and obedience. Jesus spoke of another people in this passage who would be faithful to God’s rules and God’s ways. Though genuine Christians often fail, they progress toward becoming more and more like Christ. Christians long to live righteous lives because of the new birth. And, because of the Holy Spirit’s power, they do. The Beatitudes are a banner under which they rally, and in this passage, Christ holds the standard high. He fulfilled the law for Christians. Now they look to follow him by living obedient lives.

The influence of a believer—The people of God are to stand out among the nations. We are to be salt, bringing the savor of life to the world. And we are to be light, bringing truth in the midst of darkness. Jesus is the light of the world; his Word is truth. In 1 Samuel 8:19–20 the people complained to Samuel that they wanted a king so they could be like the other nations. This people, who were called to be different from those in the land of Canaan, longed to be like the pagans around them. As Christians we are to take up once again the charge to be a people set apart for God. No one will notice us if we live sinful lives like the rest of the world. If we live holy, joyful, humble, and merciful lives for Christ, and if we speak of Christ, we will be different from the people around us. We will be like a light shining in the darkness; we will be like salt on bland food.

The righteousness of a believer—The Ten Commandments list God’s laws and the standard of obedience for believers. Lest a person think he can fulfill the law on his own, Jesus went to the heart of the law in the Sermon on the Mount. He explained that men break the command against murder not only when they kill but also when they become angry. The law requires perfect obedience. Apart from Christ, we have no hope to accomplish this. Jesus, however, fulfilled the law and lived a perfectly obedient life. In fact, the whole Old Testament pointed to and was fulfilled in Christ’s coming. He did not murder and was never sinfully angry. We obey because Jesus *gave* us a righteous standing, not so we can *earn* a righteous standing. If we had to be perfect, and then made one mistake, there would be little reason or hope to go on living for God. Jesus lived a perfect life in our place. Even when we fail and become angry with a Christian brother, we can reconcile and get help from God’s Spirit to be more righteous next time.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Jesus, in Matthew 5:17, said that he came to fulfill the law and prophets. Look at Isaiah's words: "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus' death on the cross fulfills those words.

When you add up all of the prophecies that point forward to the sacrifice of Jesus, it is truly amazing that he fulfilled them all.

Jesus would be the one to fulfill the righteous life he described in the Beatitudes. We need not strive to obey Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount to earn God's favor; we strive to obey because we have already been forgiven and made righteous. Now, free of the condemnation of the law, we can follow the way of the law by following Jesus. If we should fall into sin, we need not be condemned. Instead, we confess our sin, and by the blood of Jesus our sins are covered.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 5:1–26 from the Scriptures or read story 91, "The Sermon on the Mount—The Beatitudes," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

You Are the Light of the World

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ flashlights—one for each child (have children bring in flashlights labeled with their names but also provide extras for students who don't bring one to class)
- ✓ large opaque bowl or pail

Prior to class, darken your classroom by hanging a dark sheet or by taping brown paper or black plastic over the windows with masking tape. (Even masking tape may damage finishes. Take care to test—and even ask permission—prior to taping classroom surfaces.)

As students arrive collect their flashlights. Read Matthew 5:14–16 to the class.

Turn out the lights in your classroom, turn on a flashlight and demonstrate what happens to the light when you place a bowl over a flashlight. Remove the bowl and walk around the class shining your light in the children's faces (not too close). Help them to see that your light has an effect on them.

Turn on the classroom lights and discuss with the children what kinds of things can cause our lights to be hidden. (sin, a reluctance or fear of sharing Jesus with others, or simply rejecting the gospel)

Turn the lights off again. Then ask the students to name some of the beatitudes and other good works that help our lights to shine bright for Jesus. As kids give answers, hand them a flashlight.

Distribute all the flashlights and use the following exercise to demonstrate the gospel.

Turn out the room lights. Explain that the dark room represents the world without the gospel. Without the cross of Jesus and God's plan of salvation, we would be in darkness separated from God. The good news is that God had a plan: the gospel! God sent his one and only Son to die on the cross and take the punishment that we deserve. After three days, Jesus rose again from the dead and now he sits at the right hand of his father in heaven. Explain that the flashlights represent the work of salvation made possible by grace in the lives of God's people.

Have students turn on the flashlights and shine them around the room. Explain that the lights represent the illuminating effect of Christians living out their lives and sharing the gospel with others.

Our lights for Jesus cast out the darkness of sin and can help others see their need for forgiveness and give God glory because of it.

Have the kids turn off their flashlights. Then say, “the worst thing we can do is to become like the world or hide our lights for Jesus. This dark world needs our light to shine so that others may come to know Christ. We want others to know to whom we belong! So, remember to keep your lights on so that others may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.”

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **15 MIN**

The Power of Salt

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ popcorn (unsalted)
- ✓ salt
- ✓ two large bowls
- ✓ napkins (enough for the class)

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate the effect of salt, setting up a conversation with the class on how and why we are the salt of the earth.

Ask the class if they would like some popcorn. Divide it between the two bowls. Sprinkle salt on the popcorn in one of the bowls. Have the children sample popcorn from both bowls and tell you which they prefer—popcorn that is salted or unsalted. Talk about how salt “brings life” to the flavor of the popcorn. Then lead the class in discussing the following questions:

- **Why do you think Jesus called his people “the salt of the earth”?**
(Salt radically affects the flavor of food. So does the message of the gospel radically affect the lives of those who receive it.)
- **Why would salt be worthless if it were to lose its saltiness?**
(The whole purpose of salt is to be salty. If it were to lose its saltiness it would be worthless. This is not to say a Christian is worthless if he or she does not share the gospel with others, but to stress the importance of our influence on a lost and dying world.)
- **Review the gospel and how it is our motivation for living a holy life. Then ask the class how their righteous living would affect those around them.**

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 13—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Why did Jesus go up on the mountain to teach the crowds?**
(He went up on the mountain so that more people could see and hear him.)
- **What do you like about what Jesus taught?**
(Accept any answer.)
- **What did Jesus say we would get a reward in heaven for?**
(In Matthew 5:11–12 Jesus teaches that if someone says evil things about you because you follow Jesus you will get a great reward in heaven.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Not an Iota, Not a Dot

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a page from a Hebrew Bible (enough copies for the whole class)
- ✓ paper and pencils

This activity will help the class understand the words of Matthew 5:18. It will provide a great introduction to talking about God's law.

Pass out the copy of the page from the Hebrew Bible along with paper and pencils. Explain to the class what they are looking at and how the Hebrew language uses a completely different alphabet than ours.

Explain to them that their task is to make a copy of the page and they should not leave out even one mark. Give them a few minutes and, after they realize the difficulty of the task, interrupt them. Ask them how easy it would have been to miss a mark; then read Matthew 5:17–20. Explain that God in his providence ensured that the Bible was not confused in its transmission to us through the centuries.

The scribes realized just how crucial it was to perfectly copy God's Word. Should part of the law be compromised or lost, we would not know to follow it. Their diligence in making accurate copies has ensured we have the Word of God today.

Jesus was not referring to the need for accurate copies of the law but to the complete fulfillment of the law. Every stroke of the law must be obeyed and fulfilled for salvation to come. Jesus was the one who fully obeyed or fulfilled the law. He now extends his righteousness to us.

It is hard enough to copy the law correctly but impossible for us to live perfectly. In Christ, we receive his perfect obedience to the law. Which is more difficult: to make a perfect copy of the entire Hebrew Old Testament, or to do perfectly what it says? (It is more difficult to do what it says.)

Can anyone hope to do what it says without mistake? (No. We could not hope to follow God's law perfectly ourselves. Considering that our obedience is not just outward but obedience of thoughts as well, we all fail.)

