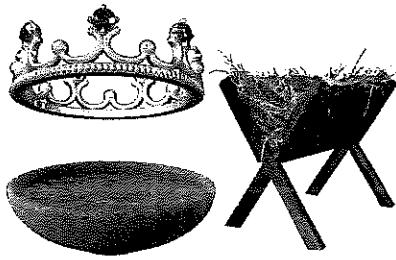


One Story: Miracles



Topic

Jesus' compassion

Theme

Jesus used His power to demonstrate His compassion.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will plan a way to demonstrate the compassion of Christ.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 10

Scripture Focus

Matt. 14:22–36; Mark 3:1–12; Luke 8:22–56

Summary

In Luke 4:18 and 19 Jesus outlined His mission on earth. This lesson considers the different ways He demonstrated His compassion by using His divine power over nature, sickness, Satan, and death.

Outline

I. Compassionate Power over Nature

- A. The obedient fish
- B. Calming the storm
- C. Feeding the five thousand

II. Compassionate Power over Sickness

- A. Healing the paralyzed man
- B. Cleansing the lepers
- C. Giving sight to the blind

III. Compassionate Power over Satan

IV. Compassionate Power over Death

Memory Verses

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18, 19).

GETTING STARTED

Poor Guy

As a family drove to a local restaurant they passed a homeless man begging for food. The mother commented how unfortunate and sad it was to see someone without any food. The father added that the homeless man is a reminder that they needed to be thankful for all God provides for them.

ASK: Would you describe either the mother or father as being compassionate?

ASK: Is feeling sorry for someone what compassion is all about? Explain.

(Q1) *Compassion is more than sympathy. It also includes a desire to alleviate the person's need.*

ASK: What is the greatest example of compassion you have witnessed? (Q2)

Jesus had true compassion that showed in His miracles. This lesson will present some of Jesus' miracles to show His compassionate power. Of course, Jesus' ultimate display of compassion came when He willingly went to the cross on our behalf.

More than a Feeling

ASK: Name some difficult situations people could go through.

ASK: How might a person show compassion in some of the situations we mentioned?

Compassion is more than feeling sorry for someone. It involves sympathy that moves a person to alleviate a person's need. Jesus is the ultimate example of compassion. His compassionate heart was most obvious as He performed His miracles. This lesson will cover some of the miracles in which Jesus showed His compassionate power.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

ASK: Do you think people would have recognized Jesus' deity if He had not done miraculous works? Explain. (Q3) *Some did as God revealed it to them, but most would not have recognized His deity without the miracles. Even with the miracles, many still doubted Jesus. He refused to give them additional signs, other than His resurrection, to prove He was God's Son.*

Isaiah 61:1 and 2 prophesied what Messiah would do in Israel when He came. At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus stood in the synagogue in Nazareth to read from that passage (Luke 4:16, 17). And then He applied the passage to Himself

Lesson four includes comments about Luke 4:16–30. That lesson focuses on Jesus' ministry to Gentiles as emphasized in 4:22–30. This lesson focuses on the quote from Isaiah 61:1 and 2b about Jesus' ministry to the poor and needy.

by saying, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears* (4:21).

See Luke 7:22 for a partial list of ways Jesus displayed His compassionate power.

READ: Luke 4:18, 19. **ASK:** What did the prophesy say Jesus would do? (Q4) *Preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom to the captives and sight to the blind, to free the oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*

The Gospels give the account of Jesus' ministry of compassionate deliverance. Jesus displayed His compassionate power by delivering people from nature, sickness, Satan, and even death .

I. Compassionate Power over Nature

A. The obedient fish

Jesus preached to a multitude, using Simon Peter's fishing boat as a platform after Peter and his men had fished all night without catching anything. When Jesus concluded His message, He instructed Peter to launch out and cast his nets. Peter protested but obeyed. The result was more fish than the fishermen could handle (Luke 5:1-7).

READ: Luke 5:8, 9. **ASK:** How did Peter respond once Jesus showed He can control the fish in the sea? (Q5) *He realized he was a sinner, fell down at Jesus feet, and asked that Jesus depart from him. Peter was keenly aware of His sin in Jesus' presence.*

Jesus did not depart from Peter. Instead Jesus told Peter not to fear for Peter would become a fisher of men (5:10, 11). When Peter, James, and John came to shore, they forsook all they had and followed Jesus—not an easy decision to make. They had just caught the largest haul they could ever catch, something every single fisherman dreams about. Imagine if Jesus had joined the fishermen's crew. They would have been the wealthiest fishermen in Israel!

ASK: In what sense did Peter, James, and John become the wealthiest fishermen in Israel? (Q6) *They served the Lord for the rest of their lives, winning souls to Christ, and storing up for themselves incorruptible treasure in Heaven.*

ASK: How was this miracle a demonstration of Jesus' compassion for Peter and his fellow fishermen? (Q7) *Jesus called them from their temporal lives with limited earthly value to lives of eternal value.*

B. Calming the storm

Throughout His Galilean ministry Jesus often crossed the Sea of Galilee. He could sit down or lie down to rest while His fishermen-disciples cared for the boat during the crossing. It was a shorter and quicker way to travel—except during storms, which arose often and with little warning. Of the many tempests that swept the Sea of Galilee, the Gospels mention two occasions on which Christ performed a miracle to calm the stormy sea.

After a busy day, Jesus and His disciples entered a boat to cross the lake to

the region of the Gadarenes, an area inhabited largely by Gentiles, where Jesus desired to minister. Weary after a long day, He lay down and slept. Then a sudden storm swept over the lake. Even after the storm rose to its full fury, Jesus slept on (Mark 4:36–38). The disciples, in their fear and impatience with the Lord, awoke Him, crying, *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* He arose, and at His rebuke of the wind and sea, the storm instantly ceased (4:39). Jesus then addressed the disciples.

READ: Mark 4:39–41. **ASK:** How did Jesus show compassion to the disciples through the calming of the wind and the waves? (Q8) *He used the circumstances to build their faith in Him. Later in ministry as they faced difficult trials, they certainly thought back to that day and gained confidence in the Lord.*

The disciples had seen Jesus care for other needs in supernatural ways, but they had not learned to trust Him to meet their needs. In the end the revelation of His power over the forces of nature and the obvious implication of His deity were more important to His disciples than His act of stilling the storm.

ASK: How might the account of Jesus stilling the storm help build your faith in God? (Q9)

C. Feeding the five thousand

Jesus had gone to a remote area across the Sea of Galilee for some rest (Mark 6:30–33). Strong headwinds probably hindered His boat as it crossed, for we read that the crowds following Him had time to hurry around the lake and get to the landing point before He did.

ASK: How would a person normally react when his much needed rest is interrupted by a crowd of highly demanding people? (Q10) *With great disappointment and complaining.*

Remember that Jesus is ultimately in charge of the weather. He already showed that in stilling the wind. He could have made sure the boat made good enough time to beat the crowd to the other side of the sea. But in His providence the boat arrived at the same time as the crowd.

READ: Mark 6:34. **ASK:** What motivated Jesus to minister to the crowd? (Q11) *His compassion for the people.*

Jesus spent the rest of the day teaching the crowd. In their haste the people had made no provision for food for that long day, and it was a long way back home. Their problem seemed too big to solve, for the area could not provide sufficient food. The crowd was large, consisting of five thousand men, plus women and children. To buy bread for such a multitude, even if enough bread were available, would have cost eight months' pay for an average worker. The disciples told Jesus to send the crowd home hungry (6:35, 36).

Jesus felt compassion toward the people in their spiritual need, and He also cared for them in their physical need (6:37). Jesus accepted the little lunch offered

to Him so He could manifest His power by multiplying it. Five thousand men, plus women and children, *did all eat, and were filled* (6:42). This was another tremendously helpful lesson for the disciples. They would have times in the future when they would need to know that Jesus is the compassionate provider of needs.

II. Compassionate Power over Sickness

Works of healing were part of Jesus' ministry from the beginning. Jesus did not perform mass, impersonal healings. His goal was not to heal as many people as He could in His three-year ministry, but the healings were helpful in communicating both His power and compassion. He healed each person compassionately, whether He was ministering to a multitude (Luke 4:40) or to an individual. Consider a few examples.

A. Healing the paralyzed man

Four friends of a paralyzed man were so certain Jesus could restore their friend to wholeness that they placed him before Jesus in a dramatic way. They tore off a roof and lowered their friend down so he rested in front of Jesus (Mark 2:1-4). Jesus noted the faith of the men in their determination to bring their friend to Jesus and in the man's willingness to risk that dangerous mode of entry (2:5).

They believed in Jesus' power and in His willingness to heal. Yet Jesus didn't heal the paralytic immediately. Instead He exhibited an attribute of His deity and, recognizing the man's faith, forgave the man's sins (2:5). When the scribes began to reason in their minds that only God could forgive sins, Jesus read their thoughts and mentioned that it is easier to say that a man's sins are forgiven than it is to tell him to take up his bed and walk (2:6-9).

READ: Mark 2:10, 11. **ASK:** Why did Jesus delay in healing the man? (Q12) *So those watching would know that He has the power to forgive sins.*

ASK: What was more compassionate, forgiving the man's sins or healing his body? Explain. (Q13) *Both were compassionate, but the forgiveness of sins was by far the greatest problem removed from the paralytic that day.*

The paralytic lived the rest of his days with an ability to walk (2:12), but he eventually died of some other disease or accident. His physical healing was temporal. His spiritual healing will benefit Him forever.

B. Cleansing the lepers

Although each of the synoptic writers recorded a work of Jesus in healing someone of leprosy, only the physician, Luke, provided an account of the occasion when Jesus healed ten men together. On His last major tour of His ministry, Jesus passed from Galilee through Samaria to reach Jerusalem. Ten lepers cried out to Him to have mercy on them (Luke 17:11-13). One of them was a Samaritan; the others were Jews. In answer to their plea for mercy, Jesus told them to go to the priest, who could not heal them but who could confirm that they had been healed. It was up to the ten whether to make that journey at only Jesus' word. As they went, they were healed (17:14). Only one, the Samaritan, returned to thank Jesus.

READ: Luke 17:15, 16. **ASK:** What was the leper's appropriate response to Jesus' compassionate healing? (Q14) *He glorified God with a loud voice and fell down on his face at Jesus' feet to give Him thanks.*

By his response, the leper expressed faith that Jesus is God (17:15–19). This interaction between the Samaritan and Jesus clearly showed that salvation is for all, for no one was more hated by the Jews than the Samaritans.

C. Giving sight to the blind

Except for the restoration of Malchus' ear in Gethsemane the night Christ was betrayed, the last recorded healing miracle of Jesus was that of giving sight to two blind men who begged for mercy as He passed them on His way to Jerusalem. Even though He was on His way to suffer and die for the sin of mankind, Jesus had compassion for the condition of those two men.

READ: Matthew 20:29–31. **ASK:** What was the crowd's opinion of the two blind men who were causing a scene? (Q15) *They warned them to be quiet. They were glorying in Jesus as He made His way toward Jerusalem.*

The crowd missed that Jesus is all about compassion. They had no idea that He was nearing the time when He would display His compassion for the entire world on the cross. In retrospect, their quieting of the two blind beggars is so out of place and against Jesus' mission as the light of the world (John 8:12).

In many of His miracles Jesus had merely spoken to accomplish the healing. But in the case of these blind men, He reached out and touched their eyes, *and immediately their eyes received sight* (20:34). Not only were their eyes changed, but their lives were changed as well, for they followed Christ.

III. Compassionate Power over Satan

As prince of this world, Satan seeks not only to rule men in his kingdom of darkness but even to possess them body and soul. Demons, part of the angelic host that defected from Heaven when Satan rebelled against God, can possess bodies, influence people's minds, and seriously affect every aspect of human life (Mark 1:23–28). Satan's demons grudgingly recognized Jesus Christ's divine nature; after all, they had known Him from before creation. But they refused to depart from those they controlled except by His direct command (Mark 3:11; 5:7; Luke 4:3, 41; 8:28). The compassionate Christ was concerned with this satanic attack on the human race and, in His ministry, delivered many children and adults from demon possession. People who could see their own sinful conditions recognized the superiority of Jesus and responded in faith (Matt. 15:21–28). They received deliverance from the demons' control and entered into a relationship with the living God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

IV. Compassionate Power over Death

The Synoptics record just three times when Jesus raised someone from the dead. People may find natural explanations for a person's recovery from bodily ailments, but faking death is practically impossible. Jairus's daughter, for example, still lay

in the room where she had died (Mark 5:22–24, 35–43). The widow's son lay in his coffin on the way to the cemetery when Jesus brought him back to life (Luke 7:11–17). Lazarus had lain in the grave for four days before Jesus came to call him back to life (John 11:1–44).

READ: Mark 5:41–43. **ASK:** What remarkable touch of compassion did Jesus show after raising Jairus's daughter from the dead (v. 43)? (Q16) *He told her family to make sure she got something to eat.*

Each restoration of life brought instant rejoicing to family and friends and greater public admiration for Jesus. This ascending scale of the miraculous also brought increasing opposition as proof accumulated that Jesus did indeed fulfill prophecy concerning the coming of Messiah (Luke 4:14–21).

John the Baptist sent some of his disciples to double-check with Jesus that He really is the Messiah, the One Israel had been waiting for.

READ: Luke 7:18–22. **ASK:** Why would Jesus' miracles be a sufficient answer to John the Baptist's questions and doubts? (Q17) *The miracles confirmed Jesus' deity and His Messiahship.*

MAKING IT PERSONAL

Jesus' Compassion Today

READ: Psalms 86:15; 145:8; Lamentations 3:22, 23. **ASK:** How are we recipients of God's compassion today? (Q18) *He empowers us through the Holy Spirit; He encourages us through the Word; He gives us friends to sharpen us; He gives us His enabling grace in times of weakness and loss.*



RESOURCE: Display resource 10. **ASK:** How might we show Jesus' compassion today? (Record or reveal answers.) (Q19) *Share the gospel with the lost; visit hurting individuals; take time to pray for and with people; provide for their needs; disciple them; show an interest in them.*

ASK: How well do you demonstrate the Christlike quality of compassion? (Q20) Encourage the learners to be actively looking for ways to show compassion to the people in their lives and in the world around them.

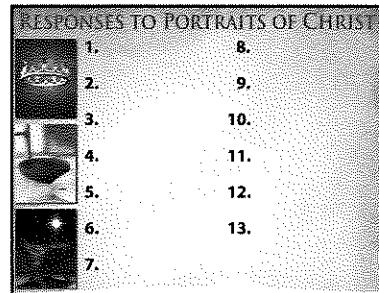
Group Project

Take time to plan as a group a compassionate ministry your learners can undertake. Remember that being compassionate is not an end in itself when ministering to the lost. Making the lost comfortable without telling them the gospel is to do them a disservice.

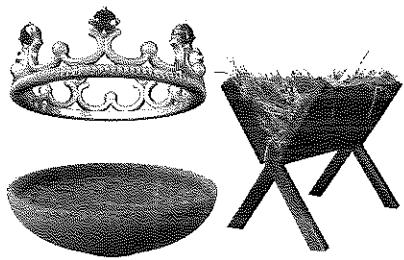
Summary and Memory Verses

RESOURCE: Display resource 1. Add a summary statement for lesson 7 or use the following: Show Jesus' compassion to others.

Encourage learners to memorize Luke 4:18 and 19. Give them an opportunity to say the verses in class next week.



One Story: Transfiguration



Topic

Transfiguration

Theme

The Transfiguration revealed Jesus' glory, alerted the disciples to His coming death, and pointed to His future kingdom.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will consider how the Transfiguration should affect his service for God as well as His witness.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 11
- Visual 1 from resource CD

Scripture Focus

Matt. 16:1–4; 13–20; 17:1–12; Mark 9:1–13; Luke 9:18–36

Summary

This lesson looks at Peter's answer to Jesus' question, Who do you think I am? It then considers the events and significance of the Transfiguration and looks at what responses it evokes from people, including learners today.

Outline

- I. The Realization of Jesus as Messiah
 - A. People postulated about Jesus' identity
 - B. Jesus asked about His identity
- II. The Transfiguration of Christ
 - A. The revelation of Christ's glory
 - B. The conversation about Christ's death
- III. The Response to the Revelation of Christ
 - A. The initial response
 - B. The intermediate response
 - C. The current response

Memory Verse

"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"
(Matthew 17:5).