

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 15 MIN

The Memory Game

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ prize for the winning side
- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Keeping the Whole Law?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencil and paper
- ✓ Bibles for the class

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Light Drawing

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

He Has Come!

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker or copies of Isaiah 55:1–5
- ✓ Bibles for the class

TOTAL 80 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.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Iota and Keraia

When Jesus says, "not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:18), he is talking about the smallest parts of written letters. Jesus used the Greek words *iota* (the Greek letter that is the nearest equivalent to the Hebrew *yodh*, the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet) and *keraia* (the smallest part of a written letter). We sometimes use the Greek word *iota* in a similar way when we say, "It won't matter one iota!" When Jesus says "not a dot" (*keraia*), he is referring to the tail of a letter like our lowercase "y" or "g." Translators have used the word "dot" in the ESV because when we write our lowercase "i" we place a dot over the top of the letter, which is the smallest part of our written language. Jesus is saying that not even the dot on a letter "i" will pass away until the law is fulfilled. Basically, Jesus is making the point that the law must be fulfilled even down to the least part.

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 **15 MIN**

The Memory Game

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ prize for the winning side
- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Memorize the Beatitudes as a class. You can do this by writing the Beatitudes on the board and have the children recite them, erasing words as they repeat them, forcing the class to try and remember the missing words. Split up the class into groups of five, and give them some time to work on the passage. Each group should pick a leader to coach them by repeating the Beatitudes over and over until their group has memorized them. Tell them that if each person in their group can memorize at least one verse and repeat it, they will get a bonus point. Verses should be recited in their proper order. Reward every verse recited perfectly with one point. Each team is allowed three helps without penalty. Give out prizes at the end.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **20 MIN**

Keeping the Whole Law?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencil and paper
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Distribute paper and pencils. See that everyone has a Bible and have them look up James 2:10 and answer the following question: What are the implications of breaking even one of God's laws?

The purpose in looking up James 2:10 is to show just how impossible it is to keep the law in our own strength. If we combine what we learn about the law from Jesus in Matthew 5:21–22—that we need to obey the law in our thoughts—with what James is saying, it is obvious there is no hope of earning righteousness through obeying the law. Help your class to see that our only hope is through Christ. Together read Romans 3:19–24 to learn how God solved this problem through the life of Christ.

Ask the class how understanding the difficult requirements of the law and our sinfulness helps us to desire Christ. Since we all fail, what hope do we have that our righteousness will surpass that of the Pharisees? (Our hope is not in our own righteousness, but in Jesus', which is extended to everyone who believes and places their trust in him.)

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

Light Drawing

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Have the children draw a picture that illustrates Matthew 5:14–16. Ask them to include the words of Matthew 5:14 somewhere in the drawing.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **10 MIN****He Has Come!****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker or copies of Isaiah 55:1–5
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Prior to class write Isaiah 55:1–5 on the whiteboard. (Alternatively, bring in copies of the passage to distribute.)

After teaching the main lesson, tell the class that the Old Testament prophets foretold the day when Jesus would come. In today’s Bible passage, Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the prophets but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17). Read the verses from Isaiah that you wrote on the whiteboard (or distribute the copies) and ask the class if they see anything that points forward to Jesus and connects with today’s passage from Matthew. (Have them compare Matthew 5:6 with Isaiah 55:1–2).

Continue by explaining that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed the thirsty and hungry, telling them that the answer for their need was found in him. Have the children turn to John 6:35. There Jesus reveals that he is the bread of life that nourishes us. Isaiah foretells a day when all who are thirsty and hungry will be filled by one who will make an everlasting covenant with them (Isaiah 55:3). Jesus fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy.

Finally, Isaiah reports that God will call a people he does not know (the Gentiles) because of the “Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 55:5). Have the children look up Mark 1:24 and notice the devil called Jesus the “Holy One” in that text. The prophets didn’t know all the details, but they knew God would send the “Holy One,” the Messiah, to deliver his people from their sins.