



LESSON 7

Jesus promises rest

MATTHEW 11:20-30



To find rest, come and submit to Jesus.



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

Supporting Truths

1. Come to Jesus.
2. Submit to Jesus.
3. Depend on God.
4. Be humble.
5. Respond to the truth God has given.

Objectives

1. Recite Matthew 11:28.
2. Describe what it means to take Jesus' yoke.
3. Explain to whom God reveals Jesus and salvation.
4. Compare the Jews in Galilee to the wicked cities Jesus mentioned.
5. Explain why judgment is worse for those who know the truth but do not repent.



Lesson Summary

Jesus performed many miracles, but few repented. They did not believe because they were proud, trusting in their own wisdom. So God chose not to reveal the truth about Jesus to them, because salvation is for the humble. But to those who are humble and tired of trying to earn salvation, Jesus has good news: all who are weary may come to Him. Anyone who humbly believes, submits, and learns from Jesus will find rest for his soul.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Like the inhabitants of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, many people today know all about Jesus but still fail to repent. They are proud, trusting in their own wisdom and effort to save them. But salvation does not come to the proud. Salvation comes to those who, like infants, depend totally on the Father and the Son to provide for their needs. Come to Jesus, for He will provide rest for your soul.

LAST WEEK



Jesus forgives sin
Luke 5:17-26

THIS WEEK



Jesus promises rest
Matthew 11:20-30

NEXT WEEK



Jesus rebukes the
Pharisees
Matthew 12:22-37

Lesson Commentary

To find rest, come and submit to Jesus.

Sometimes people say they would believe in Jesus if they could actually see Him or witness a real miracle. But is that really true? By the time we get to Matthew 11, Jesus had done so many great miracles and spoken so many powerful words that His fame spread out from Galilee to the surrounding area (4:23–25). The crowds who flocked to see Him were amazed over and over again (9:8, 33), but even those who had witnessed most of His miracles refused to repent (11:20). Why did these eye-witnesses stubbornly refuse Jesus? As we will discover in today's lesson, salvation is a gift from God, which He gives only to those who humbly come to Jesus.

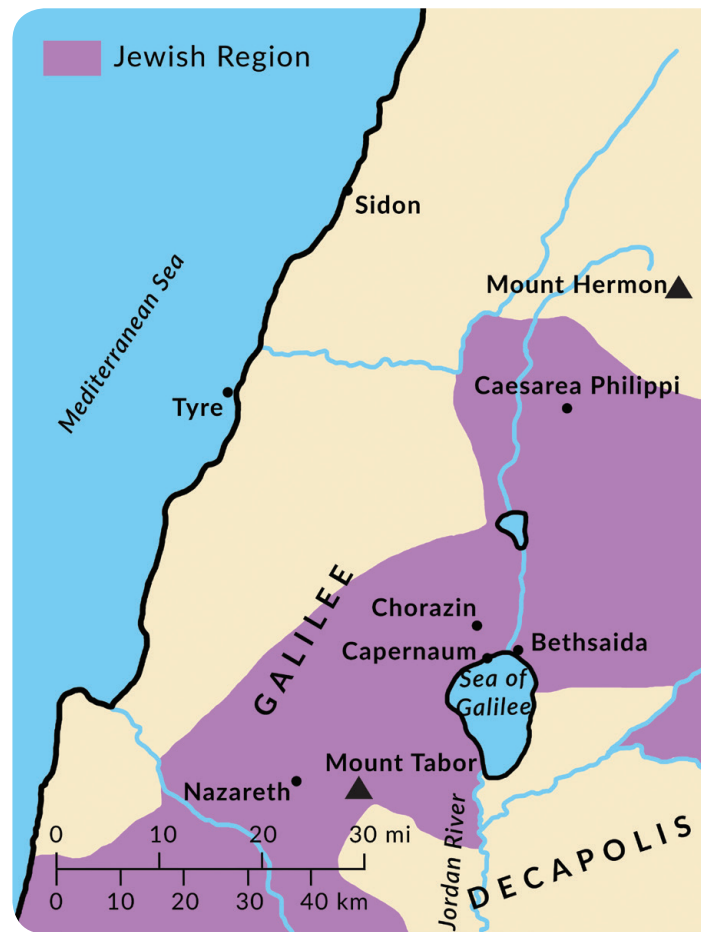
Jesus condemns those who refuse to repent (11:20–24)

As Jesus spoke, it is likely that the Jews listening to Him were furious. He pronounced “*woe*”—*great sadness or trouble*—on Chorazin and Bethsaida, two Jewish towns, and claimed these places were worse than Tyre and Sidon, two Gentile cities known for their corruption and godlessness (11:21). It was Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Tyre and Sidon, who brought Baal worship to Israel (1 Kgs 16:31), and Jezebel's daughter almost wiped out the line of David in Judah (2 Kgs 11:1). Jesus also denounced Capernaum, His ministry headquarters where He did most of His miracles and teaching. He said it was worse than Sodom (Matt 11:23; Gen 19:1–11). How

could three small towns of law-abiding Jews be that bad?

While the Jewish towns had not done the same sinful actions as Tyre, Sidon, and

Sodom, they were guilty of the same root sin: *pride* (Ezek 16:49–50; 28:12, 17). In fact, their pride was even more hateful to God because they had seen miracles that the other cities had not (Matt 11:21, 23). Despite all they had seen, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum refused to believe because they *thought they were good enough*.



Jesus said these Jews would face even harsher judgment than that inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom (11:22, 24). Sodom was permanently destroyed by fire from heaven (Gen 19:23–28), Sidon fell to Artaxerxes, king of Persia, and Tyre later fell to Alexander the Great, but the judgment Jesus was talking about was far worse. Jesus was referring to the day of judgment, at the great white throne, when those who have refused to repent will be thrown into hell (Rev 20:11–15). So while the Jews thought they were not so bad as those other cities, they were actually more guilty because they had heard God's Word many times and yet still rejected the truth (Luke 12:47–48).

Jesus reveals the Father to those who are dependent (11:25–27)

Jesus then confirmed that the problem with Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum was pride. He condemned them for trusting in their own wisdom and understanding (Matt 11:25). He was not saying that wisdom itself is the problem. The problem is trusting in the wisdom of man, for the wisdom of man cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14). This kind of



THINK ABOUT IT
Pride and faith are opposites.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus promises rest • Matthew 11:20–30



person is unwilling to listen to God, because he thinks he already knows. In contrast, God chooses to reveal Himself to people who are like infants, who are totally dependent on others to provide everything for them (Matt 11:25). So a person must be “born again” in order to be saved (John 3:3): he must start over again as a spiritual baby, totally depending on Jesus and not on his own knowledge or achievements.

Why has God chosen to show Himself only to the humble (Matt 11:26). So that no human will boast in himself, but only in the Lord (1 Cor 1:28–31). The Jews thought they could control their own salvation, but Jesus called God “Lord of heaven and earth” to remind them that God controls all things, including salvation (Matt 11:25). And God the Father has given control of all things—even salvation—to His Son, Jesus Christ (11:27). This was outrageous to most Jews: how could a mere man be in charge of who is saved and who is not! But they failed to see that Jesus is truly God, and not just

man. He called God His “Father,” identifying His equality with God (11:25). He and the Father are one. So to know God, you must know His Son, for “no one comes to the Father except through [Him]” (John 14:6).



THINK ABOUT IT

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known” (John 1:18).

Jesus welcomes those who come to Him (11:28–30)

The Jews’ self-righteousness is a heavy burden to bear, and perhaps there were a few listening to Jesus who were tired of carrying this burden. So He invites all those who are exhausted from trying to find God on their own, who are worn out from endless searching for the truth through human wisdom, who are weary from trying to earn salvation, and who despair of achieving God’s standard by their own efforts (Matt 11:28). Is that you? If so, then do what Jesus says.

First, Jesus says, “Come to me.” Coming to Him means believing in Him (John 6:35). It involves coming to a

person, not to the law, a denomination, a tradition, or an idea, but to Jesus Himself.

Come to Jesus: enter into a real, personal relationship with Him. Love Him with all your heart, soul, and might (Deut 6:5).

THINK ABOUT IT

Come to Him who freely provides (Isa 55:1).



Second, Jesus says, “Take my yoke” (Matt 11:29). This means submitting to His authority and obeying His will. A yoke is a wooden harness that goes over oxen so that they can pull the farmer’s plow. It pictures submission, for it allowed the farmer to control and guide his animal. But Jesus’ yoke is not heavy (11:30). Unlike Israel’s religious leaders, who weighed the people down with man-made laws and expectations, Jesus’ commands are not burdensome (1 John 5:3). They are perfectly designed to help us live the life we were designed to live. Also, when we take His yoke, we also receive the power of His Spirit to walk according to His commands (Gal 5:16). So His yoke really is easy and light.

Third, Jesus says, “Learn from me” (11:29). While Jesus requires that you trust Him and submit to Him, He knows that you will still have many flaws. So He is a patient and gentle teacher. All He asks is that you be willing to learn. He does not expect you to be perfect, but He does expect you to be growing. He also kindly shows you how to grow and learn: by His word (1 Pet 2:2), by His people (Col 3:16), and by His Spirit (1 John 2:27).

To all who come to Jesus, He promises “rest” (Matt 11:28). That does not mean life will be easy. Expect life as a Christian to be hard. What Jesus promises is rest for your soul (11:29). No matter the storms of life that rage around you, you will be able to say, “It is well with my soul.” Instead of resisting and struggling, you will have peace with God (Rom 5:1). Instead of worrying and striving by your own strength, you will have confidence in Christ to do His work in you (Phil 1:6; 4:13). Then one day, you will enjoy perfect rest with Him in heaven forever (Rev 14:13).

Lesson Outline

To find rest, come and submit to Jesus.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

Come to Jesus

1. Because knowing about Him is not enough (11:20–24).
2. Because only Jesus can show you God (11:25–27).
3. Because only Jesus can give you rest (11:28–30).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus condemns those who refuse to repent (11:20–24).
 - Jesus condemns Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum (11:20–21a, 23a).
 - Jesus clarifies that they saw great miracles but refused to repent (11:21b, 23b).
 - Jesus compares to show how great their punishment will be (11:22, 24).
2. Jesus reveals the Father to those who are dependent (11:25–27).
 - The Father decides who will know the Son's message (11:25–26).
 - The Son reveals the Father to those He chooses (11:27).
3. Jesus welcomes those who come to Him (11:28–30).
 - Jesus invites the weary and burdened (11:28).
 - Jesus requires you to come, take His yoke, and learn from Him (11: 28–29).
 - Jesus offers true rest, gentle instruction, and an easy yoke (11:29–30).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. When the Jews saw Jesus' miracles, did they repent?**
No.
- 2. What is an infant? Can he live on his own?**
An infant is a little baby, who has to depend on his parents for everything.
- 3. Who is the only one who can make you know God?**
Jesus, the Son of God.
- 4. If you come to Jesus, what will He give you?**
Jesus will give me rest.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Which towns did Jesus condemn?**
Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, three towns in Galilee where Jesus did most of His ministry.
- 2. What did Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum have in common?**
They were very proud.
- 3. How were Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum worse than the Gentile cities?**
If the Gentile cities had seen Jesus' miracles, they would have believed. But the Jews did not.
- 4. Who is in charge of revealing the truth about Christ and salvation?**
God the Father.
- 5. To what kind of people does God reveal Christ and salvation?**
To dependent, humble people, not to the proud.
- 6. Who does Jesus invite to come to Him?**
Everyone who is weary and burdened by trying to get to God his own way.
- 7. What does it mean to take Jesus' yoke?**
It means submitting to Him, obeying His commands, doing His will.
- 8. What kind of a teacher is Jesus?**
He is gentle and patient. He knows it will take you time to learn to live His way.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

FOLLOW THE LEADER

Before the lesson, play a few games of follow the leader. Explain that the people who lived in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum liked the things Jesus did for them, but they did not want to follow Him. Explain that being a Christian means following Jesus, not just knowing things about Him.

THE BOY WHO KNEW

There once was a boy who always said, "I know." When his mom tried to teach him how to get dressed, the boy said, "I know." When his dad tried to teach him how to ride a bike, the boy said, "I know." When his teacher tried to teach him how to read, the boy said, "I know."

When his grandpa tried to teach him how to fish, the boy said, "I know." And so the boy grew up not knowing how to dress himself, ride a bike, read, fish, and many, many other things. He was too proud to admit that he did not know, so he never learned. Today we will meet a group of people who thought they already knew God. They were too proud to let Jesus teach them. Let's see what Jesus says to them.



ILLUSTRATE

HEAVY BURDEN

Fill a bag so that the children cannot move it. Explain that the bag represents the burden of trying really hard to obey God and our parents perfectly all the time. Ask the children if they try to obey God and their parents, and if they can do it perfectly. Have several children try to move the bag. Explain that the burden is too heavy for anyone to carry on their own. Trying to live good enough for God is a burden too heavy to carry. Tell the children there is only One who can carry this burden: Jesus. He invites all who are tired of trying to live perfectly to come and find rest in Him.

HE HAS MADE HIM KNOWN

Jesus revealed the character and will of God perfectly (John 1:18). Conceal various objects under a cloth and have the children try to guess what's hidden. You could even describe the object to them. Explain that you are the only person who knows exactly what the object is, and so only you can reveal it to them. Tell the children that Jesus came to make God known.



APPLY

THE YOKE OF CHRIST

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, construction paper, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Prior to class, cut out a large piece from a sheet of brown construction paper that looks like a yoke. Have children color the picture of Jesus and then draw a picture of themselves (stick figure) in the box that says "You." Glue picture of Jesus on one side of the yoke and the picture of the child on the other side of the yoke.

The Yoke of Christ
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus promises rest • Matthew 11:20–30



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, PART 1

Prepare two backpacks. Fill one with a pillow and a slip of paper with 1 John 5:3 written on it. Fill the other with rocks and piece of paper with the 10 commandments written on it (Exod 20:3–17). Challenge two children to hold the backpacks as long as they can (the contest won't be fair!). After the contest, reveal the contents of the heavy backpack. Explain that this heavy load represents the burden of trying to keep all of God's laws perfectly. Nobody can do it. But God promises rest, and a yoke that is easy and light, to those who come to Him. Want to know what's in the light backpack? We'll discover that later in today's lesson!

DANGER!

What is the most dangerous place you have been in? Did you know you are in a very dangerous place right now? Yes, Sunday school. Sunday school is dangerous because the more truth you receive from God, the worse your punishment will be if you reject that truth (Luke 12:47–48). So it all depends on how you respond. Let's see how the Jews who saw Jesus' miracles responded in today's story.



ILLUSTRATE

TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU, PART 2

Reveal the contents of the light backpack when teaching about the rest and yoke that Jesus gives to all those who come to Him (Matt 11:28–30). Explain that Jesus provides spiritual rest (pillow) and a yoke that is easy and light (read 1 John 5:3). Ask the children which backpack they'd rather hold. Explain that Jesus invites all those who are weary of trying to earn God's favor to come to Him.

OBJECT LESSONS

Bring in props mentioned by Jesus.

- **Sackcloth** is rough fabric made from camel hair that is worn next to the skin. It is not comfortable!
- **Ashes** could be thrown on the head, sat in, or rolled around in. Also, both sackcloth and ashes express deep sorrow. Together, they illustrate repentance.
- **Infant** (real or doll) illustrates dependence.
- **Yoke** is like a wooden collar that goes over oxen so that they can pull the farmer's plow. Oxen under the yoke submit to the farmer's control. To come to Christ, you must submit to His control.



APPLY

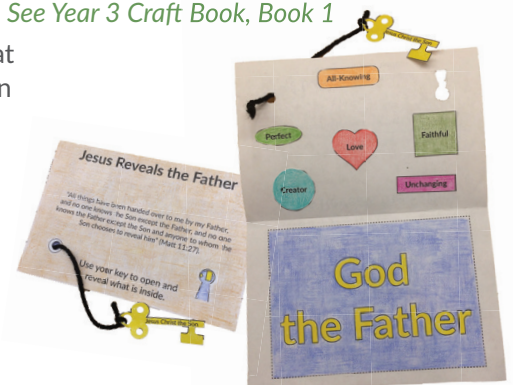
JESUS REVEALS THE FATHER

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheet, hole punch, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Have students cut and fold the "Jesus Reveals the Father" page in half. Punch a hole in the left side of the paper where indicated and then help them cut out the keyhole. Next, have the students cut out the pieces from the second page. Then they can glue the "God the Father" title and characteristics of God to the inside of the fold. Punch a hole in the top of the key and attach the key to the paper by threading one end of the piece of yarn through the key and the other end through the punched out hole.

Jesus Reveals the Father
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

JESUS REVEALS THE FATHER

Bring to class a friend (or photo) that you know well. Once you have introduced the guest, have the children try to guess several things about your friend. Later, proceed to tell them various things that you know about your friend. Be sure to point out that you are able to reveal these things because you know each other. In the same way, Jesus is the only one able to reveal the Father because He is the only one that knows Him perfectly.

WOE IS WHO?

Jesus pronounced “woe” on Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, three Jewish cities where He had performed most of His miracles (Matt 11:21, 23). These places were not so much opposed to Jesus as indifferent. However, their fate was going to be worse than Tyre, Sidon and Sodom, three Gentile cities infamous for their pagan idolatry and immorality. Because Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had received the greatest revelation, they were guilty of the greatest sin: rejecting Christ. Ask the children to try to rate different sins (lying, murder, disobeying parents, etc.). What about ignoring someone? Today, we will discover that ignoring Jesus is a much more serious sin.



ILLUSTRATE

“IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL”

Horatio Spafford wrote this song after multiple tragedies in the life of his family: His son died at the age of two, the 1871 Great Chicago Fire ruined him financially (he had invested significantly in property damaged by the fire), and his four daughters were killed after their ship sank while crossing the Atlantic Ocean (Horatio’s wife survived). Later, as Spafford sailed across the ocean to reunite with his wife, he wrote the lyrics to this song while passing the spot where his daughters had died.

A GREATER PUNISHMENT

A one-year-old draws on the wall. Minutes later, his thirteen-year-old sibling does the exact same thing. Which sibling deserves the greater punishment? The older sibling; he should know better at this age. He has had many opportunities to learn that it’s wrong to draw on the wall. In the same way, Jesus warned Capernaum that their punishment would be more severe than Sodom’s. Even though Capernaum had seen the miracles of Jesus, they continued to resist Jesus’ call for repentance. Since Capernaum had the witness of Jesus’ miracles and Sodom did not, Capernaum would be held more responsible for their disobedience.



APPLY

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

How much in common do you have with the residents of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum? Do you look down on people who don’t know the Bible or go to church? Do you talk badly about people who have gotten in trouble or lead immoral lifestyles? Do you have an attitude that says, “I chose Jesus. Look how smart I am for choosing Jesus.” Or do you humbly admit: “God chose to show me the truth, and Jesus chose me when I was weary and burdened and had nothing to offer.” If your attitude is like the first one and not the second, it is time to truly repent. But if your attitude is like the second one, then rejoice and thank God for what He has done.