



Jesus Promises Rest

Matthew 11:20–30



LESSON GOAL

The child will come to Jesus, take up His yoke, and learn from Him.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Jesus is God.
- People saw Jesus do miracles.
- The people did not believe that Jesus is God.
- Jesus warned the people to repent.

KEY VERSE

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” —*Matthew 11:28*

APPLICATION

- Repent of your sin.
- Thank God for His salvation.
- Give your burdens to God.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Rebukes the Pharisees
Matthew 12:22–37

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point them to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

Materials Needed:

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

After recording a sampling of Jesus’ miracles in Matthew 8–9, Matthew explores the various reactions the Israelites had to Jesus’ ministry (Matt. 11–12). Some were confused because Jesus did not meet their expectations. Even John the Baptist sent his disciples to ask if Jesus was the Coming One (11:2–3). Others complained that Jesus wasn’t an ascetic prophet like John. They described Jesus as a “glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (11:18). Because they hated His message and the challenge Jesus presented to their self-righteous system, the Pharisees accused Jesus of sinning because he healed on the Sabbath. They also claimed He could do miracles because He was empowered by Satan (Matt. 12). Their response to Jesus was to plan His death (12:14).

The question must be asked why the Jews didn’t respond to Jesus’ message of repentance. In Matthew 11:20–24, Jesus rebukes various cities for not responding in repentance to the miracles He did. The Jews had seen so many miracles and had such strong reason to heed Jesus’ call to repentance that they were going to receive judgment worse than that received by some of the most vile and wicked cities in human history. In Matthew 11:25–30, Jesus reveals the reason why most Jews did not repent. It was because the Father and Son chose not to reveal Themselves. Although the Father and Son have chosen not to reveal Themselves to all, any who wanted to come to Christ did not need to fear being turned away. The passage ends with Jesus’ giving an invitation to “all you who labor and are heavy laden” (12:28).

The Son Denounces (Matt. 11:20–24)

No single word should bring more fear than the word “Woe” coming from the lips of Jesus. With that one word, Jesus shows both the intensity of the Father’s displeasure and the danger of coming judgment. Because of their refusal to respond to Jesus’ miracles by heeding His command to repent, Jesus “began to rebuke the cities in which most of His miracles had been done” (11:20). Jesus pronounced two judgments. The first was against Chorazin and Bethsaida. The second was against His home Capernaum.

Jesus began by saying, “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you Bethsaida!” Chorazin was a small village a couple miles north of Capernaum, and Bethsaida was the hometown of Andrew, Peter and Philip. Few in Chorazin and Bethsaida would have thought that they were in danger of being cursed by God. But Jesus explained why doom was imminent: “If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (11:21). Chorazin and Bethsaida had stared in awe as Jesus performed miracle after miracle. They had seen their cities cleansed of demons and every

sick, lame and blind man healed. But they had not yet repented of their sin and submitted to God's Son. Jesus must have shocked the cities when he said that Tyre and Sidon, large Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean Sea, would have responded differently to the Messiah than they had. If those wicked, Baal-worshiping cities had seen Jesus do such magnificent miracles, they would have returned to God and demonstrated their sorrow over their sin by clothing themselves in rough sackcloth and smearing themselves with ashes. Their repentance would have been visible. But because Tyre and Sidon had not seen Jesus do such miracles, Jesus said, "It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you" (11:22). Judgment will be worse for Chorazin and Bethsaida than Tyre and Sidon because Chorazin and Bethsaida did not repent when they saw the Messiah's greatness. Jesus knew that their religious hearts were harder than the pagan cities of Tyre and Sidon.

Jesus had a similar message of judgment for Capernaum, the city which had become His home when He began His public ministry. While Capernaum thought that it would be "exalted to heaven," Jesus warned that it was about to "be brought down to Hades" (11:23). The city had been blessed by being the location of a multitude of Jesus' miracles, but the city had not responded to Jesus' miracles by repenting. Because of their stiff-necked rebellion, Jesus said that "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you" (11:24). Sodom, whose very name is synonymous with homosexual depravity, was destroyed by fire from heaven for its wickedness (Gen. 19). There were not even ten righteous men in that city (Gen. 18:32). But Jesus told Capernaum "if the mighty works were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day" (Matt. 11:23). God chose in His sovereignty not to do miracles in Sodom. If He had, Sodom would have repented of their wickedness. For this reason, Capernaum was on the precipice of destruction. Although it had been blessed more than any other city in human history, Capernaum refused to repent and follow Jesus. Because of their hard hearts, the people assumed that they were acceptable before God without submitting to Jesus.

The Son Praises (Matt. 11:25–26)

Jesus follows His denouncement of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum by praising the Father for being sovereign over man's salvation and for doing as He pleases. Jesus said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes" (11:25). God the Father is the Lord of heaven and earth. He alone has the right to rule as He wishes. Every sinful man considers himself "wise and prudent." He thinks that he is capable of discerning religious truth, of determining how best to save himself, and of finding his own way to happiness and heaven. Every man who considers himself "wise and prudent" does not deserve to understand "these things"—the things which are true about Jesus and the Gospel. God is perfectly just to judge every "wise and prudent" man by hiding "these things" from them.

But in the riches of His grace, God has not chosen to hide "these things" from all. God has chosen to reveal to some that they are not "wise and prudent" but that they are nothing more than "babes." Unlike those who think themselves "wise and prudent," these spiritual "babes" understand they have no right to salvation, no confidence in their works, and no ability to save themselves. They understand that they are spiritually bankrupt before God. To those who come before God humbly like a baby, God chooses to reveal the truth about Jesus and His miracles.

Jesus explains why the Father has hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes (11:25). The Father did so because it pleased Him to do so. Jesus said to the Father, "For so it seemed good in Your sight." The Father is

righteous and everything He does is righteous. He righteously does what He wants with His creation. It pleased Him not to reveal the Son to all but only to those who are spiritually babes. Jesus neither apologizes for nor regrets the Father's decision. Instead, He praises the Father for every person to whom the Father chooses to reveal Himself. Every spiritual babe is an eternal testimony to God's endless grace.

The Son Reveals (Matt. 11:27)

After praising the Father for revealing the truth about Jesus to spiritual babes, Jesus then identifies Himself as the one who reveals the Father. At the end of verse 27, Jesus says that the only human who knows the Father is the "one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." Jesus is the only one who can reveal the Father for two reasons. Jesus gives the first reason: "All things have been delivered to Me by the Father" (11:27). "All things" refers to just what Jesus says: everything! Jesus has all authority, all power, all truth, all knowledge, all judgment. Everything has been given to the Son by the Father. The Son can reveal the Father because the Father has given permission and authority to the Son to do so. The second reason that Jesus can reveal the Father is that "no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son" (11:27). Only God knows God. Because Jesus is God, He knows the Father perfectly even as the Father knows Him perfectly. Jesus not only knows the Father perfectly but can reveal the Father to whom He wishes. Just as the Father chooses to reveal the truth about Jesus to whomever He wants, Jesus reveals the Father to whomever He wants.

The Son Calls (Matt. 11:28–30)

In Matthew 11:28–30, Jesus reveals the precious truth that He does wish to make the Father known. Because of His authority, Jesus calls men to Himself and gives those who heed his call encouraging promises. Jesus calls those "who labor and are heavy laden" (11:28). To labor means to work to the point of exhaustion. Those who are heavy laden have had a load placed on them which is too heavy to carry. When Jesus calls those "who labor and are heavy laden," He calls people to Himself who recognize that they are incapable of satisfying God's righteous requirements either through their own efforts or by trying to live up to another's religious standard. He promises the weary and heavy laden, "I will give you rest" (11:28). When those who are desperate for righteousness come to Jesus, He promises to give them that righteousness. They will be able to cease their striving and have peace with God.

When Jesus called the heavy laden to Himself, He also called them to submit to Him. Jesus said to them, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me" (11:29). Those who would come to Jesus must be willing to obey both His commands and receive His instructions. Because Jesus is "gentle and lowly in heart" (11:29), His commands and instructions should not be dreaded. Jesus is both Master and Servant. He meekly and mercifully ministers to those who serve Him. Because He is such a gentle Master, Jesus promises those who follow Him, "You will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (11:29–30). Because Jesus gives His righteousness to those who have given up fabricating their own righteousness, Jesus' servants can rejoice in His righteous commands. He has taken the weight they could not bear and freed them to serve willingly. The only place a man will ever rest will be under the yoke of His Lord. For that reason, Jesus' yoke is easy and His burden light.

Conclusion

The cities in which Jesus did His miracles will receive greater judgment because they did not repent and submit to Him. They did not repent because they were

“wise and prudent” in their own eyes. For this reason, God hid the truth about Jesus from them. But God did not hide that truth from all, although all deserve to have that truth hidden. Jesus praised the Father that it pleased Him to reveal Jesus to those who are spiritual babes, who recognize they are morally deficient and unable to satisfy God’s righteous commands. To these babes, Jesus has the authority to reveal the Father. Any who would know the Father must submit to Jesus’ call and come to Him, take up His yoke and learn from Him. Any who do so will find rest, rather than judgment.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.”
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

What happens as Jesus was at a feast talking with some men?

While Jesus was at the feast a synagogue ruler named Jairus (Mark 5:22) asked Jesus help his daughter. Jairus asks Jesus if He would come and lay His hands on her so that she might live again. So Jesus went with him.

What happened as Jesus was on His way to Jairus’ house?

A sick woman found Jesus and thought “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well” (Matt. 9:21). Then she touched Jesus’ clothes.

What happened after the woman touched the edge of Jesus’ robe?

The woman was healed. Jesus knew who had touched Him. He had compassion on her.

What had happened to Jairus’ daughter?

She died.

What did Jesus do for the girl?

Jesus went into the room and took the girl by the hand and told her to arise. Her spirit came back and she was alive.



Heavy Burden

Fill a heavy-duty bag with a handle (heavy enough that kids cannot move) and place on the floor. Label the bag “BURDEN.” Explain that the bag is the burden of working 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 individually try to move the bag (be sure it is so heavy they cannot move it.) Explain that the burden is too heavy for anyone to bear on their own efforts, that is, to obey God and their parent perfectly all the time. Refer back to the “BURDEN” bag during the teaching time to explain Jesus’ call to those that understand and feel the burden.



Revealing and Concealing

Jesus revealed the character and will of God perfectly. John says “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known.”(John 1:18). In the person of Jesus, God gave us a clearer and more comprehensive picture of Himself than ever before. Today we have that picture etched on the pages of the New Testament. The children should realize that God cannot be known apart from the revelation which comes through Jesus Christ His Son. You could introduce this truth to the children by playing a game where they are to guess what various objects are which are concealed under a cloth or in a box. Have them try to guess what the object is. You could even describe the object to them. Explain to them that you are the only person who knows exactly what the object is and so only you can reveal it to them. However, Jesus did not come to describe what an object is like, but to introduce us to a person, His Father.



What Are You Working For?

Generally, children are usually not as familiar with hard work as are adults. What adult has not literally felt weary and heavy laden? Yet, Jesus was not offering rest from hard work when He invited people to come to Him, but an alternative to an impossible task; the impossible task of earning one’s salvation. Jesus’ alternative was to rest in Him, to take up His yolk and to learn from Him. Ask the children to name some things that must be paid for such as: various toys, going to the movie theatre, playing sports, video games, etc. Ask them to tell you one or two of their favorite toys or past-times. Did they have to pay for it? More than likely, they were given their favorite toys by a family member and their favorite games involved playing with friends and family. We don’t pay for these things. In fact, to attempt to pay for them would be a great insult. We enjoy these things “free of charge” because we have a relationship with the person who gave it to us. In the same way, Jesus said that we cannot pay Him anything in order to get into heaven. He wants to have a relationship with us, for us to become part of His family; He wants to be our father. That means that He will give us everything we need; but it also means that we must obey Him, just as we are to obey our moms and dads.



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Pride with a Capital “S”

Pride is focusing on SELF as the beginning and end of all things. It is seeking to serve self, to exalt self, to focus on self in independence from God. The nature of pride means that we often fail to recognize it in our own lives. Give the children a difficult task to perform e.g. to draw something difficult on the board or to put a puzzle together within a time limit or to cut out a complex craft, etc. Tell them that they may not ask for help, but must work on their own. Call them together and ask them how they felt. Did some of them feel frustrated? Did any of them think of helping others? How many of them started complaining? Pride does something very similar: it does not allow us to ask for help, it gets us all focused on ourselves and our problems and we forget about other people, it makes us feel frustrated or want to give up. Pride will always get us into trouble. Have any of the children tried to do something on their own when they should have asked for help? Why did they do this and what happened? In today’s lesson we will see how some people were in big trouble with Jesus because of their pride. They thought that they were so good and so clever that they did not need God’s help.



Take My Yoke Upon You

Have the children run a relay race. Use the race as an illustration in the teaching time. Before coming to class, prepare four backpacks (or other bags if backpacks can’t be found) for the children to carry/hold as they run. Two of the backpacks

will be very heavy. You may want to make them so heavy that the kids have to drag them. The other two backpacks can each have a fluffy pillow or a bag of popcorn, anything which will give the bag a shape but still be very light. Divide the children into two teams and have them line up. The first child from each team has to carry/drag the heavy backpack to a marked point, turn around, and bring the heavy backpack back. When they return, they must say "I am weary and heavy laden; give me rest!" When the child says the phrase, take his heavy backpack and give him a light one. He can then run to the pre-marked spot again, turn around, and come back. As soon as he returns, the next child can begin to carry his heavy backpack. The first team whose children run the course with both backpacks wins.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

The Book of Matthew tells about many of Jesus' miracles. The author, Matthew, wanted the people that read it to know what he had seen. When people see or learn about the miracles that Jesus did, then they must admit that Jesus was God in human form and then put faith in Him. At the time that Jesus lived, however, many people did not repent of their sin, and Jesus warned them of the punishment that would come because they did not repent.

Jesus especially warned the people of three cities: Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. He had performed many great miracles in these cities, and they were cities where the people believed in God. They were Jewish people, or Israelites, who said they worshiped God, but did not accept that Jesus was God. Jesus gave them every chance to see that He was God, but they did not want to repent of their sin. He said, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!" (11:21) "Woe" is a very strong word; it was Jesus' way to express God's great displeasure with them. He said it will be better for the people of the very wicked cities of Tyre and Sidon than for them when the Day of Judgment comes. Jesus knew that if the people of Tyre and Sidon, wicked as they were, had seen Jesus' miracles, then they would have repented. But the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida did see His miracles, and they thought that they were wise enough and good enough to go to heaven without repenting and putting their faith in Jesus. They were very wrong.

Jesus also rebuked the people of the city of Capernaum. While they had seen many of Jesus miracles as well, they did not respond either. They did not seem to care one way or the other. This city had been greatly blessed by God, and yet they did not respond in repentance. Jesus told them that their judgment would be far worse than the judgment of the people who had lived in the city of Sodom. Sodom was a city during the time of Abraham that was horribly wicked. God said that He could not find even ten people in the city that were good. God judged that city by

sending down fire from heaven and burning them up. Jesus said to the people of Capernaum that because they had not repented, even after seeing proof that Jesus was God, then their judgment would be a far worse judgment than the city of Sodom had received.

Jesus then praised God the Father for His perfect plan. In His prayer, Jesus taught that God only allows those whom He has chosen to hear the truth that Jesus was God, yet God will never turn away anyone who comes to Him and repents. Jesus then calls everyone who was tired of trying to work their way into heaven by following a religious system or laws. They will never get to heaven that way. Jesus said that compared to trying to work your way into heaven, repenting of your sin and putting your faith in Him is easy.

Jesus was once again making salvation available to all who believed in Him and repented of their sin. If they did, then they would find rest in Him, rather than receive His judgment.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lessons.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Map

Use a map with only the cities Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, and Capernaum identified.



Jesus Reveals the Father

As the teacher, bring to class someone that you know fairly well (you could also bring a photo of this individual). You should know this person well enough to be able to tell the class several things about them. Once you have introduced the guest, have the students try to guess several things about your visitor (i.e., their favorite color, Bible verse, or sport). After the children struggle to reveal certain information about the guest, 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 about your friend because you know each other. Explain that in the same way, Jesus is the only one able to reveal the Father because He is the only one that knows Him perfectly.

Praise and Worship

O Worship the King

Jesus, Name Above All Names

My Jesus I Love Thee

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Paper Yoke

Cut out a paper yoke or similar object (i.e., big paper donut to put around the child’s neck with the head through the donut hole). Write Matthew 11:30 on the yoke and have a picture of Jesus on it. Explain to the children that Jesus’ yoke is easy and burden is light, and He will give our souls rest. Have the children color and decorate their paper yoke.



“Jesus Reveals the Father”

Materials Needed: copies of “Jesus Reveals the Father” craft pages, yarn, scissors, glue, crayons, glitter, or other decorations

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft pages. Instruct the students to fold the “Jesus Reveals the Father” page in half. Help them 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. When the children open the page they will be able to read what Jesus reveals to us about God. Discuss that Jesus revealing God the Father was showing who He truly is, and attributes are what is true about God. Students can decorate the craft using crayons, glitter, etc.



Hide and Reveal Game

Before class begins, hide some “treasures” which could be treats, little scrolls with verses for today’s lesson or review questions for the end of the lesson. Let the children search and find them and make them difficult to find so that you will have to “reveal” where they are with clues or specific instructions. Also, the teacher could reveal the location to one child who could then find the treasure.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

*“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”
—Matthew 11:28*

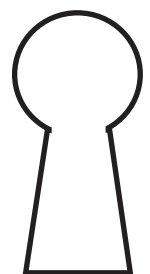
Jesus Reveals the Father

“...nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”

—*Matthew 11:27b*



Use your key to open up and reveal what is inside.

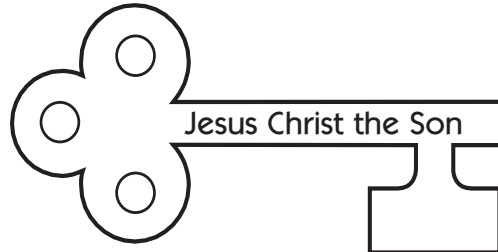


Jesus Reveals the Father

All-Knowing

Perfect

Creator



Love

Unchanging

Faithful

God
the Father



"Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent."

—Matthew 11:20



“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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 11:28–29

