

Lesson 2

A Forgiven Thief

Lesson Overview

BIBLE LESSON: Luke 19:1-10

MEMORY VERSE: He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so he will have something to share with one who has need. Ephesians 4:28

CHALLENGE MEMORY VERSE: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." John 10:10

CATECHISM:

The Seventh Commandment: Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring them into our possession by unfair dealing or fraud, but help him to improve and protect his property and living.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: The student will know:

- God wants us to give to others and not take from them.
- Jesus came to the world to save sinners.
- Changed hearts lead to changed lives.

MATERIALS: Lessons, activity sheets

LESSON OVERVIEW: The lesson focuses on Zaccheus, a tax gatherer and his encounter with Jesus which changed his life. This story will help understand the word "fraud" in the Seventh Commandment meaning. Zaccheus as a tax collector cheated people by collecting more money than was owed. He hears Jesus is coming and wants to see him. Jesus knows about Zaccheus and invites Himself to Zaccheus house. Jesus led Zaccheus to see his sin, confess it as sin and Jesus changed his heart. Zaccheus went to those he defrauded and made things right. Jesus knows and loves us just as much which is why He died on the cross to pay for our sins and we could be forgiven.

Possible questions: Who was Zaccheus? How was Zaccheus stealing? Why did Zaccheus climb a tree? What did Jesus do when He saw Zaccheus? What did Jesus do for Zaccheus? What did Zaccheus do to repay the stealing he had done? What can we do if we have stole from another person?

Activity 1: Collector, thief, money, tree, Jesus, house, house, money, heart, salvation.

Activity 2: 1: He who steals 2: must steal no longer; 3: but rather he must labor, 4: performing with his own hands what is good, 5: so that he will have something to share 6: with one who has need. Ephesians 4:28

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach

- ☑ Thank God for His work of grace in your heart and in the hearts of the children in your class.
- ☑ Pray for insight into today's lesson.

Prepare Materials

- ☑ Activity sheets
- ☑ Lessons
- ☑

Hymns and Songs

FILL IN HERE

Prayer Preparation

- Talk to God about your personal needs.
- Thank the Lord for each of the children He has placed in your class. Ask Him to prepare their minds and hearts to learn.

Bible Background

Luke 19:1-10 A Forgiven Thief

Judas was a thief, pure and simple. He stole money from the disciples that was to be used for charity and possibly other expenses. They all knew what Judas was doing and apparently did nothing about it.

Zaccheus was also a thief, but in a more subtle way. He took money from the people when they paid their taxes. He charged more than he legally should, sent the tax money to Rome and kept the rest for himself. Just as the disciples knew Judas was a thief, so all the people knew that most tax collectors were thieves, but the people could not do anything about it

This kind of theft has been present in state and government business as long as government has existed. People are by nature evil and the sinful heart seeks its own good first. When evil people rise to power, they can exercise that power over people to satisfy their greed. This kind of theft is also seen in kickbacks or bribery. No level of authority is immune to this when the people in authority have no godly or moral conscience.

What is needed to change this kind of behavior? Investigations and reforms might expose the problems and help for a time. But the sinful nature is not changed by "reforms." It can only be changed when confronted and convicted by the Law and forgiven by the grace of God. This is what happened with Zaccheus, and the change was real.

Jesus put this event and his whole ministry into perspective when He said that "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10). Jesus brought salvation to one man. He wasn't in a stadium asking 3,000 people coming forward to pray the sinner's prayer. He went to one man waiting in a tree and invited Himself to the man's house. Luke gives no indication that Jesus and Zaccheus actually went into the house. It was on their way to the house that Zaccheus stopped and made his confession (Lk 19:8).

We prefer crowds and saving many souls at once. But how many “one man” in those crowds might go home without Christ? The “one” might be found in a large or small church, a small group, a Sunday school class. Jesus looks for and finds that “one” who needs to “come down” and go with Him and one day bring him to His Father’s house.

What happened “on the way” that brought such a change of heart? It is only safe to say that when Jesus called to Zaccheus, the man saw his sin, he was convicted of his sin, and he was “saved.” Salvation had come to one man, but it always starts with one. And that one is called to go and make disciples (note Mt 28:19,20; Lk 24:46-48; Acts 1:8).

Why did Jesus say that salvation had come to this house? Because He knew, of course, but also by the fruit as seen in the words of Zaccheus. We don’t see him running down the street waving his arms and praising God. He doesn’t run into the crowd preaching. But he reveals the real fruit of God’s saving grace, the fruit of repentance: “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I am giving to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I am giving back four times as much” (19:8). (Note the law in Leviticus 5:5, Numbers 5:6,7)

Jesus had said, “Everything [everyone] that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I certainly will not cast out” (Jn 6:37). Here He received one whom God the Father had given Him.

Wherever Christ comes He opens the heart to receive Him. A person like Zaccheus who has a mind and desire to know Christ, shall be known by Him. Those whom Christ calls must humble themselves and “come down.” Zaccheus gave public proof that salvation had come to him when his heart was changed. He would not be justified by these works, but his good works now are works that God has prepared for him to do (Eph 2:10), and show the fruit of his faith and repentance. Now because of that faith, Jesus calls him “a son of Abraham” (19:9).

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Greet the children by name as they arrive.

Let the children know you are glad to see them.

Open the class with prayer, praying for each child by name, if you like.

Read the Memory Verse

Remember the appendix of ways to teach memorization of the verse. Read it clearly, “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so he will have something to share with one who has need.” *Ephesians 4:28*

Be sure to read it together aloud. Remind the children you’ll repeat the verse again at the end.

Review the Recent Lessons

Remember we have been learning about the Seventh Commandment. The previous lesson showed that sinning begins in our hearts and our thoughts. See if the students can remember something from the story in the last lesson. Show the picture of Mary, Jesus, and Judas and to help them recall what each one did. Review by asking, “What does God say about stealing?”

TEACHING TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Introduce the Lesson

Ask, "Was Judas from last week's lesson sorry?" **Say:** "Today we'll learn about another kind of thief. Let's find out if he was sorry and wanted to be forgiven."

Read the Lesson

Read the first paragraph.

Ask for a volunteer to read the second paragraph.

SAY: Zaccheus was a thief. What he did was fraud. He lied to the people when he told them they had to pay more money to the government than they really had to pay. Zaccheus kept the extra money for himself.

A crowd gathered in Jericho when Jesus came to town. Zaccheus wanted to see who the crowd was so excited to see, but he was not tall enough to see over their heads. Help the children find Luke 19 and follow along as you read verses 1-4. **ASK:** Did you find out why Zaccheus climbed a tree? (he was small, there were too many people, he wanted to see Jesus). **Read** (or ask a volunteer to read) verses 5 and 6 of Luke 19.

Read the third paragraph of the lesson.

ASK: What happened? (responses)

SAY: Something wonderful happened to Zaccheus when Jesus came to him. Let's read what Jesus says about what happened. Read the fifth paragraph.

ASK: Why did Jesus say He had come to Zaccheus's house? (responses).

SAY: When Jesus came, everything changed for Zaccheus. Now he was sorry for his sins. Now he wanted to give back what he shouldn't have taken.

ASK: Why did Jesus come down from heaven? (He came to save everyone who sins, He came to save us.)

Go back to the meaning of the Seventh Commandment from the Catechism and read it

together with the children. "We should fear and love God so that we do not rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring them into our possession by unfair dealing or fraud, but help him to improve and protect his property and living." Explain that the words "bring them into our possession by unfair dealing or fraud" means to take them for ourselves. The commandment means that we should not steal anyone's property, and we should not cheat or lie to get anything that belongs to someone else.

Discussion: What does the Seventh Commandment say that boys and girls who love Jesus should do? What kind of situations can you think of where you could ask God to help you keep this commandment?

Words to Talk About

It is okay to explain the new words in the beginning or as you encounter them.

fraud cheating someone. Fraud is stealing.

unfair dealing Tricking someone to get more money than we should. Unfair dealing is stealing.

Repeat the Memory Verses

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Do the Activities Together

The activity worksheets for this section are printed in the student books.

Backwards Scramble

Activity 1

Unscramble the words in green and fill in the blank.

Activity 1
BACKWARDS SCRAMBLE

The words in green are backwards. Can you fix them and write them correctly in the blanks? Then read the story.

1. Zaccheus was a tax collector
rotcolloc

2. and a thief
feint

3. Tax collectors got rich by stealing money
yenom

4. Zaccheus climbed up high in a sycamore tree
eert

5. to see Jesus
susej


6. Jesus said, "Hurry and come down. Today I must stay at your house"
esuoh

7. Zaccheus was glad Jesus came to his house
esuoh

8. He was sorry for stealing money
yenom

9. Jesus had changed his heart
tresh

10. and brought him salvation
notavias



Steal No Longer

Activity 2

Number the phrases in the correct order, draw and color a picture.

Activity 2
STEAL NO LONGER

Number the memory verse phrases in the correct order. Take turns reading the verse. Draw Zaccheus in the tree trying to see Jesus. Color the picture.



4 performing with his own hands what is good.

1 He who steals

6 with one who has need. Ephesians 4:28

2 must steal no longer.

3 but rather he must labor.

5 so that he will have something to share

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CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Closing Prayer

Ask about prayer requests. Allow students to pray if they choose. Allow time for silent prayer. Encourage students to bow their heads and close their eyes.