

Lesson 11

God Blesses Me

Bible Lesson: Genesis 32:1-12, 33:1-4

Memory Verse: The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.
Psalms 145:8

Enrichment Memory Verse: He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. *Psalms 103:10-11*

Catechism Memory Work: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. *What does this mean?* I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; . . .

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

- ✠ The student will understand that God is good to us because He is good and because He loves us.
- ✠ The student will be convinced that he does not deserve any of the good things God gives him. Instead he deserves to be punished for his sins.
- ✠ The student will see the need to and want to confess his sins and ask Jesus for forgiveness. He will know that God will forgive his sins for Jesus sake.

Prepare Materials:

Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

- ◆ Map used for Lesson 2 with Haran and the way to Canaan marked Quarter for each student
- ◆ Box of paper clips.
- ◆ Pencils for each student
- ◆ Scissors for each student

Prayer Preparation

Thank God for His love and mercy. Thank Him for giving us good things and for withholding what we deserve because of our sins. Thank God for each of your students. Pray for love and understanding of your students and for the ability to meet their needs by God's grace. Pray that God may pour out His abundant grace upon your pupils and their families this week.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

Jacob had often been a deceitful man. He had tricked his brother into forfeiting his birthright. With his mother's help, he had deceived his elderly, blind father so that the blessing his father thought was being given to Esau was in fact given to Jacob. To escape the anger of his brother, Esau, Jacob had found it necessary to go to a foreign country.

For twenty years Jacob lived in the country near Haran and worked for his uncle Laban. While he was there, he married Laban's two daughters, fathered eleven children, and accumulated large herds of cattle and flocks of

sheep. Eventually a dispute between him and Laban resulted in another move for Jacob, back to the land of Canaan.

On his way back to Canaan, Jacob realized that Esau would hear of his return and would probably still be angry at him. He sent messengers ahead with a message for Esau, hoping to gain Esau's favor. The messengers returned and reported to Jacob that Esau was on his way with four hundred men to meet Jacob's band. Jacob expected the worst and feared for his life.

He divided the people and possessions he had into two groups, thinking that if Esau attacked one group the other would escape. Then he prayed.

Jacob's prayer reveals that he was now a desperate man. All of the scheming and deceiving that had been a part of his former life would be of no help now. He was caught. He could not return to Laban and was afraid of what lay ahead of him in Esau's presence and he prayed.

God had visited Jacob on several occasions and had made great promises to him. He had promised to give the land of Canaan to Jacob's descendants. He had promised to bless Jacob and to bring Jacob safely back to the land. He had promised not to leave Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). He had told Jacob to leave Laban and return to Canaan (Gen. 31:3). God had talked to Jacob. Now Jacob talked to God.

Jacob was well aware of God's blessings. He remembered that he had left Canaan alone and with no possessions. He had been an exile with no home, no country, no possessions, and probably no friends. Now he was the father of a large family; he had many servants and owned large herds of cattle, donkeys, camels, goats and sheep. This great change had occurred in twenty years in a foreign land. Surely God had blessed Jacob.

Jacob confessed his unworthiness. He acknowledged that he was prosperous because God had been faithful. Jacob's prosperity could not be credited to Jacob's ability or worthiness. God had promised to make Jacob prosper. Standing around Jacob in two large groups was the fulfillment of God's promise.

Jacob prayed for help. He knew he could not help himself. If he was to be saved, the work of saving would have to be done by God. He reminded God of the promise that had been made to bless Jacob and his descendants. Now he held God to the promise of mercy. "Deliver me," he cried.

God delivered Jacob. Esau displayed no anger toward Jacob when the two met. Instead, he showed forgiveness and love to the brother who had mistreated him so badly in the past. God heard Jacob's prayer and graciously provided more than Jacob could expect. This is all because He acts in grace, not according to what is deserved.

B. Creed Study

The world often puts a high value on that which we know is temporary and will fade away. We are blessed by God through all the good gifts we have been given. This includes clothing, food, our families, and all those other gifts we have mentioned through these lessons. We don't deny the value or benefit of these gifts but desire that they be seen with the correct understanding of what they are. The world places a value upon them which often makes them seem to be the only gifts that matter. This is shown in the perversion of the Gospel which is sometimes called the "prosperity gospel." This "prosperity gospel" is no Gospel at all but a slavery placed upon many that leads to despair. This teaching makes our material possessions the deciding factor in whether God loves and cares for us or not. Many are left thinking that God approves of them or disapproves of them based on what they have.

The 1st Article makes clear to us that our Lord blesses us in ways that are despised by the world. The world would think that God should bless us through giving to us the best things of the world. The world thinks that God would really show us that He cares about us by making sure we have large bank accounts and all the newest and best homes, cars, and gadgets. God's ways are higher than our ways. He provides to us in the ways that we need not because we have earned them but because we have need to receive them in this way. He

provides to us not because we are the best and brightest but because of who He is. The wages we deserve are death but the gift He gives is eternal life (Romans 6:23).

He is slow to anger and abounding in love; giving to us what we need. We are reminded again that our greatest need is that God would deal with our sins that have earned us condemnation and hell; eternal separation from God. But over and above all of that, His mercy continues to flow forth through these gifts we receive.

Throughout much of history people would take vows of poverty giving away all their earthly possessions to please and honor God. We might call this the twin confusion to the prosperity gospel mentioned above. We see wisdom in Proverbs 30:8-9, **“Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny you and say, “Who is the Lord?” or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.”** There are certainly temptations present whether we have much or little. However, when we think that we have pleased God by what we have or by what we have given away we have said that we are the ones who have determined what we have and what we should receive. In the meaning of the 1st Article we confess something very different. We say that those things which we receive are gifts given to us by a gracious God, gifts that we should be thankful for and that we should not cast aside but enjoy. He is a generous and merciful Father.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

Talk with students as they arrive. Ask about special things that have happened during the week. Enlist their help in readying the room for class.

Open with Prayer

Ask for things to thank God for and to pray about. Ask several students to pray brief prayers. Close with the prayer that God will teach us today.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:

From the Bible: Psalm 121:7

And

From the Catechism: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul, together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil. . .

Review

Review lesson 10 asking questions selected from the following or others. You may wish to divide the class into two teams and give points to each side for questions answered correctly.

1. Who are our three greatest enemies?

(the devil, the world, our flesh)

2. What do our enemies try to get us to do?

(do sinful things, disobey God, not believe in Jesus)

3. Why is the devil our enemy?

(He puts sinful thoughts into our minds.)

4. What is our flesh?

(the part of us that wants to do sinful things)

5. What is the worst sin?

(not believing in Jesus)

6. What did Satan try to get Peter to do?

(turn away from Jesus)

7. What did Satan really get Peter to do?

(tell a terrible lie, say he didn't know Jesus)

8. Did Peter lose his faith?

(no)

9. Why not?

(Jesus prayed for him. Jesus came to him and talked to him. Jesus' Word helped Peter to confess his sin, and to keep trusting in Jesus.)

Introduce Wall Words

deserve—

merciful—

extends—

blessing—

deceitful—

foreign—

livestock—

unworthy—

lovingkindness—

Introduce the Lesson

Spill the box of paper clips. Ask a student to pick them up. Promise to give the student a quarter. When she has finished, give a quarter to each student. **ASK** "Jan (name of student who did the favor) earned her quarter, but did the rest of you earn yours? Did you deserve the quarters?"

(Alternate plan: **ASK** Did you ever get something you didn't deserve? Or did you ever get out of a punishment, even though you deserved one?)

SAY God gives us many good things that we don't deserve. Instead we deserve to be punished for our sins. In today's lesson we will learn about a man who deserved to be punished. Instead he had good things happen to him.

Teach the Lesson

SAY Open your books to Lesson 11 and read the lesson title. Let's all read it together. Can you think of some things God has done for you because He loves you? (student responses) **READ** the first paragraph to the class. **ASK** What are blessings? (good things God gives to us) **MAKE** a list on the chalkboard of blessings children list.

SAY In the next paragraph, find a word that means you earned something or you have it coming to you. (deserve) Read this paragraph to find out what would happen to us if God gave us what we deserve. (We wouldn't have any good things. We would be sent away from God to be punished forever for our sins.) **ASK** a good reader to read this paragraph aloud.

READ paragraph 3. **ASK** Then why does God keep on giving us good gifts? (Because He is good; He is a good and merciful Father.) Find a word that means God is kind and loving and doesn't want to punish us even though we deserve it. (Merciful - that's why He sent Jesus to die for us so that we could be forgiven and not be punished.) Does God give us good things because we are good? Are we good? (No, we are sinful. God gives us good things because He is good. He is a good and merciful Father.)

SAY Today's Bible lesson tells about how God gave blessings to a man even though he sinned. The man was Jacob. Jacob's name means "liar" or "deceiver." Jacob was a liar when he was young. He wanted the blessings that his father had given to his

brother, Esau. He tricked his father into giving the blessings to him. He put on his brother's clothes and put skins on his arms to make them feel like Esau's hairy arms. Then he told his old, blind father that he was Esau. Let's see how it happened. Read paragraph 4 silently. (You may want to ask a good reader to read it aloud.) **ASK** Did Jacob's father give him the blessing? (yes) What happened then? (Esau was angry. Jacob ran away because he was afraid. He went to Haran, the place his grandfather, Abraham, had come from. Find it on this map. Remember when you marked his journey on the map on your activity sheet? (response) What happened to Jacob in Haran? (He was married and had many children. He became rich and had many sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.) Why did all these good things happen to the liar Jacob? (He trusted God and asked God to forgive him. God was merciful and gave Jacob all these good things even though he didn't deserve them. God forgave Jacob and gave him good things.)

SAY The next paragraph will tell you how long Jacob stayed in Haran. Read it to find out. **ASK** How long did Jacob stay in Haran? (twenty years) What did he do then? (He loaded up all that he had and started for home, with his family and all his livestock.) Why did he go back to the place where his angry brother, Esau, was? (The Lord told him to go back to the place where his father and grandfather had lived.)

ASK Do you suppose Esau will still be angry with Jacob? Do you think he will punish Jacob? Read the next paragraph and find out. After the silent reading, **LEAD** the class in reading paragraph 7 aloud. **ASK** Did Jacob think Esau would still be angry? (yes) What two things did Jacob do? (He divided all his people and his livestock into two groups and he prayed.) Why did Jacob divide the people and livestock into two groups? (He thought that if Esau attacked one group, the other group would escape.) Find Jacob's prayer in this paragraph. Find some words that mean Jacob didn't deserve the good things that God had given him. ("I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which you have shown to our servant.") **ASK** Would that be a good prayer for us to pray? (Yes, because we aren't worthy of the good things God has given us.) What did Jacob ask God to do for him? (protect him from Esau) Let's find out if God answered that prayer.

SAY Read the next paragraph, the one that begins, "God answered..." **ASK** Did God answer Jacob's prayer? How do you know? (Yes, Esau was not

angry anymore. He ran to meet Jacob and hugged and kissed him.)

SAY Let's read the story from the Bible. Find Genesis chapter 32. Follow along while I read verses 1 through 12. Listen and see if you hear the story that is in our books. **READ** verses 1-12 and verse 4 of chapter 33 to the class.

SAY Find the last paragraph of the lesson in your book. Jacob really deserved to be punished because he had lied to his father and had tricked his brother

out of the blessings Esau was going to have. But Esau treated him kindly instead. The ending of our lesson teaches us that we are like Jacob. Let's read it together. **READ** the last paragraph with the class. **ASK** How are we like Jacob? (We deserve to be punished because of our sins.) Does God punish His children? (No, He treats them with love and kindness.) When we confess our sins as Jacob did, and trust Jesus as our Savior, God forgives our sins because Jesus died on the cross for us. Then we don't get the punishment we deserve. God gives us all the blessings that He has for His children.

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE—Psalm 145:8

The LORD is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.

CATECHISM—Have each student add the next segment of the Meaning to the First Article of The Apostles' Creed:

Add: *and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me;...*

Then the student may draw whatever kind of line he wishes to make an edge for the puzzle piece. Cut the piece off along that line.

Allow students time to place all their puzzle pieces together. At this point, the students should have pieces for the following portion of The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, my eyes and ears, and all my members, my reason and all the powers of my soul, together with food and clothing, home and family, and all my property; that He daily provides abundantly for all the needs of my life, protects me from all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and that He does this purely out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me;

Then read together all the segments of The Apostles' Creed that the students have.

Students should place the puzzle piece in their envelope.

Send the puzzle home with the students and encourage them to put their puzzle together once a day, read through it, and memorize the new section and any other sections they haven't committed to memory

See sample puzzle at the front of this Teacher Manual.

Activity Pages

Activity 1—Who Did It?

ANSWERS

Esau

came to meet his brother with 400 men
forgave his brother
welcomed his brother home

Jacob

stole a blessing from his brother
lied to his father
was afraid of his brother
ran away to another country
became rich

Activity 2—Look Carefully

ANSWERS

1. God told Jacob that he (*should/should not*) go back to his home country.
2. Jacob thought his brother would (welcome/*punish*) him.
3. God gives us what we (do/*do not*) deserve.
4. We deserve (forgiveness/*punishment*) because of our sin.
5. God treats us the way He does because (*He is good/we are good*).

Activity 3
ANSWERS

- M
- E
- R
- C
- I

- F
- U
- L

“The Lord is gracious and MERCIFUL”

CLOSING THE LESSON**Closing Prayer**

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for loving us and being merciful to us. Thank you that since You are our Father, You forgive us for Jesus' sake and don't give us the punishment we deserve. Instead You give us many good gifts that we don't deserve. We pray that every boy and girl will confess their sins and trust in Jesus as Savior. Thank You for dying on the cross for each one of us. Amen.

Assignment

1. Challenge the students to take home their activity sheets and use them to tell someone about the lesson and about how God forgives and is merciful.
2. Remind the students to work on Psalm 145:8 and the First Article at home.