

Lesson 7

No Longer Condemned

Bible Lesson: Matthew 8:1-4, Luke 17:12-19

Memory Verse: Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
Romans 8:1

Enrichment Memory Verse: Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. *Psalms 51:1-2*

Catechism Memory Work: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; . . .
What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, . . .

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

- ✚ The student will understand what it means to be "lost and condemned."
- ✚ The student will understand that all people in the world are lost and condemned until God calls them to repent and believe in Jesus, their Savior.
- ✚ The student will be convinced of his own sinfulness and great need of a Savior.
- ✚ The student will be assured that Jesus is the Savior they need and will confess their sins and trust Jesus as Savior from sin and judgment.

Prepare Materials:

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

- ◆ Gavel representing or similar to a judge's gavel.

- ◆ Map of the Old Testament Holy Land, preferably one showing Abraham's journeys.
- ◆ Pictures from the student book Lesson 7.

Prayer Preparation

1. Pray for your own preparation to lead your students to a knowledge of their sin and need. Pray that God's Word may convince you of your own sin and need.
2. Pray for your students by name. Thank God for those who know and trust Jesus as their Savior. Thank Him for the opportunity to witness to the students. Pray that God will do a work in them through the law and the gospel.
3. Pray for the coming Sunday. Pray for the class session and for God's protection and guidance, that His work may not be hindered by disruption or by inattention.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

In the Old Testament great care was taken with the items to be used in the Temple. They were sanctified, set apart, for special use in that sacred place. As believers in Christ, we too have been given new life and are made holy by God. This is a declaration of God by which we are justified; being made children of God. The work of the Holy Spirit graciously does not end at that point but continues as God does His great work of sanctification. The Savior does this through His Word and Sacraments.

Even as we recognize God's work of transforming us we note that this work will not be finished in this world. In fact, we pray that God would bring this good work to completion at the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). We don't claim to be perfect or sinless. Only Jesus was perfect. We humbly proclaim as the Scriptures teach us that as believers we are simultaneously saint and sinner. In the eyes of God, because of His

declaration we are holy and righteous but our neighbors around us see that we continue to sin. It is a righteousness not our own; it is imputed to us. It is credited to our accounts (Genesis 15:6).

Because of God's declaration we are no longer condemned prisoners but freed children (I John 3). We are also given the promise that the time will come when we are removed even from the presence of sin. But even now we are given freedom. This is what allows for hope, peace, and joy. It is the Gospel that motivates and prompts us to love and care for others.

So as we consider our confession of the 2nd Article we should be aware of how different this is from the norm for people. Many people live lives full of guilt and shame. Others feel broken and helpless because they can see their many failings and mistakes. In the Creed we confess that God has made a proclamation that takes away guilt, shame, and condemnation. As it says in Romans 8:1, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

This is not a sweeping of our sins "under the rug" or God "turning a blind eye" to our wickedness. The price was paid. In Washington D.C. the Korean War Memorial has these words etched on its wall: "Freedom Is Not Free." That memorial points to the high cost of protecting and defending a nation. When we confess the 2nd Article of the Apostles' Creed we are pointing to the high price that was paid by Christ for the sins of the whole world.

"...you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*" (I Peter 1:18-19).

B. Creed Study

A convicted criminal, condemned to death and living on death row, might best understand what it means to be condemned. He will suffer the full wrath of the law unless someone intervenes. He would be ready to hear and accept any word of pardon. A sinner apart from God's grace is literally on death row; he is lost and condemned. He is a child of "God's wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). All he can expect is judgment and death, the full force of the wrath of God.

The Wrath of God

Wrath is a quality of a holy and just and righteous God, without which God would cease to be fully righteous and just, and His love would degenerate into sentimentality.

God's wrath is directed at all sin and evil, and therefore against all sinners who continue in their sinful ways. They will suffer the natural consequences of their sin (Romans 1:18-32), and they will suffer eternal death (John 3:36). Our only hope and salvation is to find refuge in Christ (John 3:16; Romans 8:1).

It is the law of God that shows us our sin and the wrath of God toward sin. It is the gospel that tells us of God's mercy and grace for sinners, that they need no longer be objects of His wrath but recipients of His grace in Jesus Christ (John 3:16). The love of

God for sinners is seen in Jesus, whom He sent to redeem us "lost and condemned creatures." Jesus took our place on the cross, on "death row," and died in our place. He took the full wrath of God upon Himself, delivering us from the wrath to come (Romans 5:9; Thessalonians 1:10). On the other hand, the wrath of God remains on all who do not obey the Son or believe in Him (John 3:18, 36).

Man's sin and disobedience must always be followed by divine wrath and judgment.

These times of judgment, or "days of wrath," come periodically, as seen in the examples of the flood (Genesis 6-8) and the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 18-19). But at the same time, God's wrath is always tempered with mercy, giving time for people to repent and be saved. When punishment is delayed for that reason, people don't always understand God's mercy, failing to see that His kindness and patience are intended to lead to repentance (Romans 2:4).

The Flood (Genesis 6-8)

Judgment

Today's stories show how utterly helpless we are to save ourselves. In every case God must "reach down" to intervene and deliver the lost and condemned creatures. The great flood (Genesis 6-8) was God's first full-scale exercise of judgment on a sinful world. Moses writes, "the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

Jesus verifies the fact that all evil comes from the heart (Matthew 15:18,19). And Paul knows that "nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Romans 7:18).

The result of this evil in the heart is that God says He will "blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky" (Genesis 6:7). Just as God later informs Abraham of His plans (Genesis 18:17), so He now tells Noah, "I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life,...everything that is on the earth shall perish"(Genesis 6:17).

Mercy

Sin would have destroyed them all were it not for the mercy of God to them through a righteous man. God showed His patience through Noah, a "preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5). If as "few" as eight souls were saved (I Peter 3:20), seven of them owed their life to a single one (Hebrews 11:7). But God was patient with all men for 120 years while Noah built the ark, an act which also condemned the world because of its unbelief and unrighteousness.

The Doom of Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33)

Judgment

Now God's wrath is visited on Sodom, a city which exemplifies the total depravity of man (Genesis 19:1-11). But here, too, God makes His intent known to a righteous man. This time He doesn't wait 120 years, but He does give Abraham an opportunity to plead for the city. Even this brief time of prayer is a time of grace and patience.

The Lord and two angels have been visiting Abraham (18:1-15). As they leave, Abraham sees them off and they look down toward Sodom (18:16). The following conversation (18:17-21) establishes the need and the effectiveness of Abraham's prayer and the Lord's kindness and patience.

The conversation is between friends. The question, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" (18:17) proves Abraham to be the "friend of God" (Isaiah 41:8) by Jesus' own criterion (John 15:15). The expression "I have chosen (known) him" (18:19) re-emphasizes the relationship. It means "I have made him My friend."

It is the Lord who takes the initiative in this relationship with Abraham, as He does with all His children. From what we know of God in Scripture it must always be God's choice. We do not say, "Lord, I'd like to have a part in this." He chooses us (Deuteronomy 7:6-9; John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4). God seeks and chooses us in Christ. Just as Abraham communes with God here, so in Jesus we have the same access to the Father and His grace (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The "outcry of Sodom" (18:20,21) may mean the outcry against it or simply the crying evil of the place. Either way it reflects the heart of man (Genesis 6:5; Matthew 15:18,19) and it reminds us that God's judgments are well-weighed and perfectly informed. He does not act without knowing all the facts, or without perfect justice. Abraham realizes this when he says, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" (18:25c).

Mercy

As the two angels turn toward Sodom (18:22), the Lord now waits for Abraham to speak, having already said what he will do. This is a time of mercy as God waits for the righteous man to pray.

The prayer itself is simple, but unique (18:23-32). It would be easy to say the prayer comes close to haggling, or bargaining, with God. A better word is "exploring." Abraham carefully moves ahead with faith, humility, and confidence in God's goodness.

Abraham's prayer shows a love for the whole city, not just for Lot.

This prayer should prompt us to pray for the lost and condemned people around us.

God's will is that they be saved (I Timothy 2:4). The outcry is great today, too, and God will one day judge the world. But in the meantime He is patient and kind. Today is still a day of grace and that grace comes through Jesus who came to save the world

(John 3:16-18).

Abraham knows that God is just and will do the right thing here (18:25). So he pleads that Sodom might be spared if some righteous people are found there. When sin is ripe for judgment, God will not spare the unrepentant. But He will deliver His covenant people out of the judgment, those living in fellowship with Him through the blood of Christ.

The law condemns (Romans 3:20) as it shows us our sin and the wrath of God toward sin. The law and its condemnation ought to strike fear and terror into our hearts, a holy fear of God that will drive us to Christ. That work of the law must begin early in life.

C. F. W. Walther writes in "Law and Gospel" that "even little children have to pass through these experiences of

anguish and terror in the presence of the law. The reason why so many imagine that they can pass for really good Christians is because their parents reared them to be self-righteous Pharisees; they never made them aware of the fact that they are poor, miserable sinners."

In Adam we are poor, miserable sinners; lost and condemned. But in Christ there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1). Why? Because Jesus Christ bore our sins in His body on the cross. At the right time He died for us (Romans 5:9). The law of double jeopardy states that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since Jesus paid the penalty for our sins, when we are "in Christ" God cannot condemn us. In Christ God "reached down" to take us from "death row" and give us safe refuge in Christ.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

If you use memory verse cards in class for memorization, encourage early arriving students to review previously learned verses. Puzzles of the Apostles Creed would also be good review activities.

Open with Prayer

Encourage students to participate in opening prayer with sentence prayers.

Conclude with a prayer asking God for the Holy Spirit's guidance in teaching each student and for the teacher in understanding what God has to teach on this day.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:

From the Bible: Isaiah 43:1

And

From the Catechism: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead."

Add: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; . . . *What does this mean?*

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, . . .

Review

Discuss the following questions on Lesson 6: **ASK** Who were Hosea and Gomer? What do you remember about them? (*Hosea was a prophet of*

God whose wife, Gomer, committed adultery and was sold as a slave. Hosea bought her back, redeemed her, for 6 ounces of gold and ten bushels of grain.) Why did God have Hosea redeem Gomer? (*To teach His people that they had left Him and needed to be redeemed; to teach His people that He loved them and would redeem them.*) What does the word redeem mean? (*Buy back someone who has gone away from God.*) What did Jesus pay to redeem us? (*His holy and precious blood, His innocent suffering and death.*)

Introduce Wall Words

leprosy—
progressive—
condemned—
shunned—
contaminated—
gratefulness—
hopelessness—

Introduce the Lesson

SHOW the gavel or mallet used to represent a gavel. **ASK** Do you know what a judge uses a gavel for? (*He raps with it to call for order in the court; he may use it to announce his sentence on a person who has been found guilty of a crime.*) A judge may say, "I sentence you to prison for the rest of your life." Or if a crime is very serious, a person may be sentenced to die. Then we say he has been condemned to die. **SAY** Find Lesson 7 in your book and read the title aloud... "No Longer Condemned." That sounds as if someone has been condemned and then pardoned. In this lesson we'll find out about being condemned.

Teach the Lesson

This section is still in progress.

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE—Romans 8:1

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

CATECHISM—READ

The Second Article of Redemption

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; . . .

What does this mean?

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, . . .

Review the first part of the meaning. Then learn "...Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature..." What is a lost and condemned creature? (a person who is helpless to save himself, who is condemned because of his sin.) Have the class recite the meaning from the beginning through today's portion. **ASK** Who does this meaning say has redeemed me? (*Jesus Christ, True God and True Man.*) Who is my Lord? (*Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me.*) Complete memorization.

Activity Pages

Activity 1— Test Your Memory

ANSWERS

1. manifested, God, begotten, world, live, Him
2. Word, flesh, glory, grace, truth
3. God, fathers, prophets, ways, spoken
4. Lamb, God, sin, world
5. world, kingdom, Lord, Christ, reign
6. Creator, redeemed, name
7. condemnation, those, Christ

1. John 1:14
2. Isaiah 43:1
3. Revelation
4. 1 John 4:9

Activity 2

ANSWERS

1. 1
2. B
3. 5
4. A
5. C
6. 6
7. E
8. 2
9. 3
10. D

CLOSING THE LESSON

Closing Prayer

Father in heaven, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die for us when we were ungodly and didn't know You. Thank you for giving us Your Word so we can confess our sins and trust in You. We pray that everyone here will listen to Your warning and let You rescue him. Help us to lead other people to know Jesus too. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Assignment

1. Remind the students to share this lesson with someone who needs to know Jesus.
2. Remind the students to complete unfinished activities and practice memory work every day.