

PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021 Curriculum



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PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021 Spiritual Action Plan

Theme: “Restored”

Theme Passage: Matthew 5:1-12

1 When He saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He began to teach them, saying: 3 “The poor in spirit are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 4 Those who mourn are blessed, for they will be comforted. 5 The gentle are blessed, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed, for they will be filled. 7 The merciful are blessed, for they will be shown mercy. 8 The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God. 9 The peacemakers are blessed, for they will be called sons of God. 10 Those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 11 You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version. (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009), Mt 5:1–12.

Theme Development: The 2021 PowerPlus Camp Theme “Restored” grows from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, and specifically the Beatitudes. For generations leading up to Jesus’ earthly ministry, religious leaders had twisted God’s Word in order to create a man-centered religion that provided power and prestige for its elite, while keeping others in bondage to rules and checklists. In His sermon, Jesus restored the Truth. He taught that God cares about the heart of every person, rich and poor, young and old, male and female, Jew and Gentile. He restored the Truth that life should be centered on God and loving our neighbors the way He loves us. This week’s sermons, dorm devotions, and Bible stories grow from teachings and events during Jesus’ earthly ministry which illustrate the first twelve verses of Matthew 5. As you prepare, please pray for the lives of preteens and adults to be restored in Christ.

Camp Pastors, please take the worship message themes and topics, and develop your messages as the Holy Spirit leads you to communicate most effectively with your particular age groups. **Church Bible Story Leaders**, please make the Bible stories your own. The stories have been written so that they could be read verbatim, but that would probably be the weakest way to teach. Please feel free to use your own illustrations and the creative object lessons to help the preteens of your church connect with the Scripture and with the Lord. Please remember that your Bible story location will most likely be used by other church groups when it’s not your scheduled Bible story time; thus, visual aids will need to be removed when you finish each story. Print the Bible stories for each of your Bible Story Leaders. Be sure to make copies of the quiet time pages before you come to camp...one copy per camper. No supplies will be available at Pineywoods. **Bedtime Dorm Devotional Leaders**, please do NOT skip a bedtime dorm devotional. The devotionals are written specifically to help members of your cabin to meditate on the day’s lessons while preparing their hearts for the next day’s lessons. Ideally they will fall asleep treasuring God’s Word in their hearts. Remember to bring one copy of each night’s devotional for each cabin that your group occupies.



DAY 1 (Sunday/Wednesday)

Day 1 Worship Message (Camp Pastors): “God Wants Us To Be Restored” (Restored Theme Interpretation); The message will focus on the depravity of all humanity, & the Bible’s emphasis on repentance & faith. This message should focus on Matthew 5:3 & the story of The Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32 (17-21).

Suggested Elements:

- Everyone is God’s child because He created us, but sin breaks our family relationship with God.
- We are all sinners by nature. Through sin, we have all denied God as our Father.
- Only God’s Holy Spirit can bring us to our senses & repentance (turning away from sin & self).
- To be poor in spirit is to be contrite, or hypersensitive to one’s own sin.
- God wants us to turn away from sin & be restored to His family.
- Jesus died to pay for us to be restored to God the Father.
- We are only restored to God by putting our faith in Jesus only & following Jesus only.

Suggested Scriptures: Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9-10 & 13, Matthew 4:17 & 19

Day 1 Bedtime Dorm Devotional (Dorm Leaders): “Jesus Restored A Little Girl’s Life & Comforted Her Parents” Matthew 5:4, 9:18-19, 23-26

DAY 2 (Monday/Thursday)

Day 2 Bible Story (Church Bible Story Leaders): “Jesus Restores When We Are Humble & Hunger For God” Matthew 5:5-6, 8:5-13, John 3:1-21. When the Centurion humbled himself before Jesus, Jesus healed the Centurion’s servant. When Nicodemus humbled himself before Jesus in search for God’s righteousness, Jesus explained God’s plan to restore sinners to Himself.

Day 2 Worship Message (Camp Pastors): “Jesus Is The Only Way We Can Be Restored” The message will build on today’s Bible story of Nicodemus & Jesus in John 3:1-21 & the fourth Beatitude concerning hungering & thirsting for righteousness in Matthew 5:6.

Suggested Elements:

- Religion can never restore us to God. We can never be good enough.
- God loves us so much that Jesus died for us.
- Jesus is the only way to eternal, abundant life.
- Believing unto salvation is giving your life to Jesus, & living your life for Jesus.
- God wants us to hunger & thirst for righteousness every day. This means to become more like Jesus every day.

Suggested Scriptures: Romans 3:23, John 3:1-21, 10:10, 14:6, Acts 4:11-12, 2 Corinthians 5:15 & 17, Galatians 2:20, 2 Timothy 2:15, 3:16-17, Hebrews 12:1-2

Day 2 Bedtime Dorm Devotional (Dorm Leaders): “Jesus Restored Love By Telling A Story Of Mercy” (The Parable of the Good Samaritan) Matthew 5:7, Luke 10:25-37



DAY 3 (Tuesday/Friday)

Day 3 Bible Story (Church Bible Story Leaders): “Jesus Restores Our Hearts By Purifying Us From Sin” Matthew 5:7-8, John 8:2-11, Luke 5:17-26 All of us have impure hearts, because we are all sinners. There is nothing that we can do to purify our own hearts. During Jesus’ day, some people thought they were pure because they were religious, or because they didn’t do some of the bad things that other people did. Jesus came to restore the hearts of people who put their faith in Him, not themselves. Jesus did this by forgiving people of their sins. Jesus is still purifying hearts by forgiving sins today.

Day 3 Worship Message (Camp Pastors): “Jesus Wants To Use Us To Help Others To Be Restored” The message will build on today’s Bible Story that emphasized the men who brought their friend to Jesus in Luke 5:17-26 (highlighting Matthew 5:8), & the seventh & eighth Beatitudes about being peacemakers & persevering persecution found in Matthew 5:9-12.

Suggested Elements:

- Jesus died to make peace between God & people.
- If you have turned away from your sin & put all your trust in Jesus, then He has made peace between you & God.
- Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He left instructions for everyone who trusts in Him to also help others find peace with God.
- After people find peace with God through Jesus, then they can find peace with each other.
- When we try to help people find peace through Jesus, & when we try to help people find peace with each other, we should expect that some people will not like us.
- We must continue to love people, even when they hurt us.
- We should help others join our church where we can learn how to be peacemakers together.

Suggested Scriptures: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 2:8-10, 1 Peter 4:12-19, Hebrews 12:1-3, Hebrews 10:23-25

Day 3 Bedtime Dorm Devotional (Dorm Leaders): “Jesus Restored Peter So Peter Could Help Others Be Restored” Matthew 5:9-12, 26:69-75, John 21:15-19



PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021

Day 2 Bible Story (Monday or Thursday)

“Jesus Restores When We Are Humble & Hunger For God”

Matthew 5:5-6, 8:5-13, John 3:1-21

Notes to Bible Story Leaders:

1. This lesson has been written so that you could read it as a script, but please remember that it's much better if you don't simply read it to your kids. Know the activities & the lesson beforehand, & engage your kids personally. Use this lesson as a guide. Feel free to be creative & modify or add activities. Feel free to teach this lesson from your strengths in a way that best meets your group's needs.
2. When you see ---, pause for a moment to give kids an opportunity to respond, or answer a question.
3. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations have been taken from the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*®, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. In addition, bracketed words [] may have been inserted by the author in an attempt to help those who might be unfamiliar with some Bible words to better understand the flow of the text. Bracketed words are not intended to change the interpretation of the text in any form or fashion. The Bible text has been italicized for your convenience to more clearly distinguish it from the teaching script. Also, for your convenience, Bible passages referred to but not expressly taught, may have been included at the end of the lesson or in parentheses within the lesson.
4. Please remember to pray that God's Spirit would speak through you to the hearts of everyone who attends this Bible story. May the lost be rescued, & may the rescued be drawn to new depths of love & appreciation for Christ.

Introduction:

DON'T say any names, but have you ever known somebody who thought they were better than everybody else? - - - Did you know that it is natural for all of us to think that we're better than some other people? It's natural for us, but it's NOT right for us. You see, we like to think we're better than other people, because it makes us feel good about ourselves...But all of this is wrong. The Bible teaches us that in the beginning God created people in His image. This means that we are all equal. It does not matter where we come from, what we look like, or what language we speak. We are all equal, because God made us in His image...And in the beginning people knew they were equal because they had a perfect relationship with God.



So how did things get so messed up? If God made us all equal, why did some people start thinking they were better than other people? Why did other people start thinking that they weren't as good as some people? - - - The answer is SIN. When Adam and Eve sinned, suddenly they were ashamed. This sin caused brokenness between Adam and Eve, and it caused brokenness between them and God. The reason it is natural for us to think that we are better than other people is because we are sinners too. Actually, that's another way we are all equal. We are all equal sinners. Can anyone give me a definition of sin? - - - Right, sin is when we do anything, say anything, or think anything that is disobedient to God. ALL of us are sinners. We are all broken, and the biggest problem is that because of sin, all people naturally have a broken relationship with God.

Our theme for camp this week is "Restored." Jesus came to earth to restore our relationship with the Lord. He came to teach us the way to be restored. He came to make the way for us to be restored...And the coolest thing is that Jesus came because He IS the way to be restored.

Even though Jesus lived as 100% God and 100% human here on earth for 33 1/2 years, He never once sinned. The Bible even says that Jesus was tempted in all the ways we are tempted, but He never once sinned in action, speech, or thought. Even though Jesus was completely innocent, He allowed Himself to be beaten, spit on, cursed at, and nailed to a cross to die. He died in the place that you and I deserved to be. WE are the sinners. We all deserved to die on that cross, but because the Lord loves us so much, Jesus died in our place. He died for you and for me. He died to restore our relationship...our friendship with God. He died on a Friday, and some friends put His body in a tomb (like a cave with a huge stone in front of it). Jesus was in the tomb on Friday evening, all day Saturday, and then on Sunday morning, Jesus came back to life...He was resurrected from the grave! He was restored to life!

On the cross, Jesus paid for our sins. He made a way for us to be restored with God. At the tomb, Jesus conquered death for us. He made a way for our lives to be restored in Heaven, even AFTER our bodies die here on earth. Now Jesus offers forgiveness of sin and eternal life as a free gift. Anyone who wants this forgiveness and eternal life can have it. Anyone who wants to be restored with God can be restored with God. The Bible is clear. To have this life, we must repent and trust in Jesus. Repent means to turn away from our sin...to turn away from our self. Repent means that we are sorry for sinning, and we don't want to be controlled by sin anymore...But repent is more than just turning away from sin. It is also turning TO Jesus. To receive the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life, you must trust, believe in Jesus,...and trust in



Jesus alone. You can't trust in what you can do, or what your parents can do, or what your friends can do. You can't trust in what good things you do at church, or how rich or famous you become. We are saved from our sin and given the free gift of eternal life when we stop trusting in everything else, and we finally, only trust in Jesus.

This is the only way to truly be restored.

Bible Story:

Before Jesus died on the cross, He invested a lot of time teaching people about being restored. Some people were very happy to hear this good news. Other people didn't like Jesus' teaching at all. Some people weren't sure what to think. Today we'll look at two short Bible stories about two different men who came to Jesus for answers. Both of these men were powerful and had a lot of authority. They both belonged to powerful groups that did not like Jesus or His teachings...But both of these men humbled themselves to come to Jesus for help.

Before we get to those two men, let's remember that our theme Bible passage for the week is from Matthew 5. Look in your Bible and find the book of Matthew. It's in the New Testament. (Allow sufficient time for everyone to find Matthew in their Bible. Adults may need to help their preteens.) The first part of Matthew 5 is called the Beatitudes. Jesus spoke those words when He was teaching a large group of people how to be restored. Look in your Bible and read along starting with verse 3. Jesus said,

Matthew 5:3 "The poor in spirit are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 4 Those who mourn are blessed, for they will be comforted. 5 The gentle are blessed, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed, for they will be filled."

Do you remember the worship service last night? The camp pastor talked about verse 3. He talked about being poor in spirit...how we feel when we are sorry about our sin. This leads us to repent, or turn away from our sin, and turn to Jesus. Do you remember our dorm devotion last night? It helped us understand verse 4, about those who mourn. Remember, the parents were mourning because their little girl got sick and died? What did Jesus do? - - - Right, He brought her back to life, and comforted her parents. Today, as we learn about these two different men who came to Jesus, we'll see verses 5 and 6 come to life. Two powerful men came to Jesus and humbled themselves. One came because he needed Jesus to restore someone's physical health.



The other man came to Jesus because he needed Jesus to restore his spiritual health. Turn over a few pages to Matthew chapter 8 for the first story. Read in your Bible, while I read aloud.

Matthew 8:5 When [Jesus] entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible agony!” 7 “I will come and heal him,” [Jesus] told him.

Now we have to stop right here and talk about some things. This is a really strange thing that happened. Jesus lived in a very difficult time. Jesus was an Israelite. Israelites were also known as Jews or Hebrews. They worshiped the one true God...But during Jesus' life, the nation of Israel had been conquered by the Roman Empire. The Jews did not like the Romans, and the Romans did not like the Jews. The Romans forced the Israelites to pay very expensive taxes. The Romans had many false gods. They also used a huge, powerful army to control the Jews. This man in the story was a member of the Roman army. He was actually a centurion, which means he was a powerful officer in the Roman army. He commanded at least one hundred Roman soldiers.

The verses we just read are so strange, because Romans thought that the Jews were weak and less valuable than other people, but on that day, the centurion came to Jesus and begged Jesus for help. The Roman centurion would have had access to the best doctors of the day, but he came to Jesus. What did the centurion want Jesus to do? - - - Heal his servant, right. His servant was paralyzed, which means he couldn't walk...and he was in terrible pain. The centurion came to Jesus and begged Him to help his servant.

Verse six says that the Roman centurion called Jesus “Lord.” This was even more amazing. This word that the centurion used means “Master.” Even though the centurion was a Roman, and Jesus was a Jew...even though the centurion was a man of great authority and power, he came to Jesus and called Jesus “Master.” Verse seven says that Jesus answered the centurion and said, “I will come and heal him.” This also was very surprising. Just like the Romans didn't like the Jews, the Jews really didn't like the Romans. Most Jews thought that if they even visited a Roman's home, that they would become spiritually dirty. They thought this because so many Romans worshiped many false gods. It must have been a huge shock to Jesus' followers to hear Him say that He would go to the centurion's house. Let's read what happened next, starting in verse eight.



Matthew 8:8 “Lord,” the centurion replied, “I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. But only say the word, and my servant will be cured. 9 For I too am a man under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes; and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

Did you notice that the centurion called Jesus “Lord” again? The centurion completely humbled himself before Jesus. He said some amazing things to Jesus. He said, “I am not worthy to have You come under my roof.” Then he said, “But only say the word, and my servant will be cured.” Even though the centurion had all the earthly authority, and all the human power, he humbled himself before Jesus. The Roman centurion recognized that Jesus has all authority and all power. The centurion completely trusted in Jesus to heal his servant.

This is exactly what Jesus was talking about in our camp theme Bible passage when He said, ***“5 The gentle are blessed, for they will inherit the earth.”*** The word that Jesus used for “gentle” is the same word as “meek” or “humble.” This word actually means someone who has fantastic strength and power, but humbles themselves before God to be His servant. This perfectly describes the Roman centurion! The centurion recognized that Jesus was God in human flesh, and that Jesus had the power and authority to heal the paralyzed servant. He even went further to say that he understood what it meant to have power and authority...to command people to do this and that. He said this because he knew that Jesus could just say the word, and the servant would be healed. The centurion truly was “gentle,” “meek,” and “humble.” In fact, Jesus said this was so. Let’s read the next verses in the story to see.

Matthew 8:10 Hearing this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following Him, “I assure you: I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith! 11 I tell you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

WOAH! Jesus said that this non-Jewish, Roman centurion had more faith than anyone that Jesus had met in all of Israel. He also said that there would be many non-Jews who would be welcomed into God’s family. This is really good news for all of us who are not Jews. All of this was probably a huge shock to all of Jesus’ followers and friends. Then an even bigger shock was when Jesus explained in verse twelve that there would be many people who thought they would be good with God...But in the end, they would not have eternal life and go to Heaven. Instead, Jesus taught that they would be sent to a terrible place of eternal suffering called Hell. This must



have been the biggest shocker of all for Jesus' Jewish friends. The cool thing is that this was always God's plan. All the way back in Genesis, God promised Abraham (the father of the Jews) that he would become a great nation, and that he would be a blessing to all the nations of the world. In other words, God had promised that Jesus would be the Savior, not only for Jewish people, but for people from every nation, every tribe, and every language. In these verses, Jesus was restoring the understanding of what God meant way back in Genesis...a fact that the Israelites had forgotten about.

Well, all of this is awesome, but what about the centurion's servant who was paralyzed and in terrible pain? Let's read the last verse and see what happened to him.

Matthew 8:13 Then Jesus told the centurion, "Go. As you have believed, let it be done for you." And his servant was cured that very moment.

How cool is that?! Jesus did not have to go to the centurion's house. Jesus just simply stated that the centurion's servant would be healed according to the centurion's faith. When was the servant healed? - - - Right, it says he was healed immediately...that very moment. The very moment that Jesus spoke it, the centurion's servant was restored physically. In the process, a whole lot of people had their understanding about God's plan restored too...that Jesus was the Savior for the whole world, not just for the Jewish people. On that day, they also learned what it meant to humble yourself before the Lord. The centurion came to Jesus calling Him "Lord" or "Master." The centurion humbled himself before Jesus, and told Jesus that he was not worthy to have Jesus even come to his house. The centurion became an amazing example of the way we should all humble ourselves before the Lord Jesus, and put our faith totally in Jesus alone.

Our second story today is about another man who humbled himself to come to Jesus. This man wasn't a Roman centurion. This man was a Jewish religious leader. His name was Nicodemus. He belonged to the Jewish religious group known as the Pharisees. Say "Pharisee." - - - Good. The Pharisees were very well educated, and had a lot of authority among the Jewish people. The Pharisees believed that being very religious, and keeping many, many rules, made them right with God. They also believed that being very religious, and keeping many, many rules, made them better than other people who didn't keep all the rules. The Pharisees were wrong.

As Jesus began teaching about the truth, and restoring people's understanding about God, many of the Pharisees became angry with Jesus. Some of them made plans to kill Jesus, and anyone who helped Him. Even though this was the danger, Nicodemus strongly desired to meet with



Jesus. Nicodemus had heard Jesus' teachings, and he had probably seen some of the miracles that Jesus had done. Nicodemus was spiritually hungry and thirsty for real righteousness. He wanted to know the truth about Jesus.

Let's start reading in John chapter 3 to see what happened.

John 3:1 There was a man from the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to [Jesus] at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform these signs You do unless God were with him." 3 Jesus replied, "I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 "But how can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked Him. "Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?"

Let's pause right there. Did you notice in verse 2 that John tells us when Nicodemus met Jesus? When was their meeting? - - - At night, right. Many people think that Nicodemus met with Jesus at night because he didn't want the other Pharisees to know that he had met privately with Jesus. Also in verse 2, Nicodemus called Jesus by the Jewish term "Rabbi." This word was a very honorable term used for respected teachers. Then Nicodemus told Jesus that he believed Jesus was a teacher from God. During a time when the other Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus, Nicodemus came and humbled himself before Jesus.

Before Nicodemus could even ask Jesus a question, Jesus said something very strange. Look at verse 3 again. Jesus said, ***"I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*** Now that's a weird thing for Jesus to say. In verse 4, Nicodemus asked the same questions that all of us would have asked Jesus: ***"how can anyone be born when he is old?"*** and ***"Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?"***

Remember, one of the most important things that Jesus came to restore was peoples' understanding about how humans can have a right relationship with God. The Pharisees were believing that everything was based on their ability to keep a long list of rules. Not only did the Pharisees believe this, but they had taught this to all the other Jewish people. During Jesus' time on Earth, the Jewish people believed that you had to be very religious and keep many, many special rules in order to be right with God. Jesus came to correct all of the wrong teaching and restore peoples' understanding about God and His kingdom. Jesus said that a person couldn't even see the kingdom of God unless they were born again. Nicodemus didn't have a clue what Jesus meant, so Jesus explained it. Look at verse 5.



John 3:5 Jesus answered, “I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again. 8 The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don’t know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”
9 “How can these things be?” asked Nicodemus.

Okay, well that helps us understand it a little better. Jesus explained that we were all born in the flesh. That means we were all born physically from our mom...But then Jesus explained that we all must be born spiritually too. That means that we must be spiritually born by God’s Holy Spirit. Jesus explained that just like we didn’t decide when and where we would be physically born, it’s actually the Holy Spirit of God who decides when and where we will be spiritually born. Nicodemus was so confused. He had always taught that to be spiritually alive, you had to be very religious and keep a lot of special rules, but Jesus explained that being right with God, and having real spiritual life, was not the result of something that we could do, but totally the result of what God did to us. In verse 9, Nicodemus asked “How can these things be?” Skip down to verse 14 to see how Jesus explained it.

John 3:14 “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life.”

Jesus referred back to a time more than a thousand years earlier when Moses was leading the Jewish people. During Moses’ time, many of the people were living disobediently, so God was sending poisonous snakes into their camp to bite them. Many of them were dying, so Moses asked God what to do to save the people. God told Moses to make a snake out of metal and lift it up on a pole. God told Moses to tell the people that if they got bitten by a poisonous snake, all they had to do to be healed was to look at the metal snake on the pole. As crazy as it sounded, it worked. There wasn’t anything magical about the metal snake. God just wanted the people to trust Him. When they did, they lived. When they didn’t, they died.

In our story today, Jesus explained to Nicodemus that just like the metal snake was lifted up on a pole so the people could be healed from the poison of the snakes, all people were going to have to trust in Jesus so they could be healed from the poison of their own sin. Jesus called Himself the “Son of Man.” He told Nicodemus that He would be lifted up like the snake. Even though Nicodemus didn’t understand exactly what Jesus meant, Jesus was actually referring to the fact



that He would be killed on the cross in the near future. Jesus was explaining that the only way people could be restored to a right relationship with God was through trusting in Jesus. It wasn't about religion and keeping a bunch of rules. Being right with God is about putting your faith in what Jesus did on the cross by dying for our sins.

Well, this was all pretty hard for Nicodemus to understand, so Jesus explained it a little more clearly in the following verses. Let's read them together, starting with verse 16. Jesus said,

John 3:16 "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God."

Okay, so Jesus didn't give Nicodemus a list of rules to keep. Jesus explained that being right with God is about trusting in Jesus. Jesus explained that people who do not trust in Him are "condemned," and will "perish." That means that their sins will not be forgiven, and they will not have eternal life in Heaven. He explained that those who humble themselves, repent of their sins, and put all their faith in Jesus...those are the people who are forgiven and receive eternal life.

Nicodemus came to Jesus looking for answers. He knew that Jesus was very special, and had to be from God, but he did not know that Jesus was God in flesh. Just like up in verse 14, Jesus called Himself the "Son of Man," did you notice that in verses 16, 17, and 18, Jesus called Himself the "Son of God"? Jesus was helping Nicodemus to understand Jesus isn't just another wise teacher. Jesus was helping Nicodemus to understand that He is God in human flesh. Jesus was trying to help Nicodemus understand that this was always God's plan to help people. From even before the time that God created Adam and Eve, He knew that they were going to sin and ruin their relationship with Him. It was always God's plan to come to Earth as a human, live a perfect life, and die to pay for the sins of all His people. It was never about being religious and keeping a long list of rules. Even though all of this was understood by people in the very beginning, people very quickly decided that they wanted to do things their own way. They stopped trusting in God, and started trusting in themselves. Remember, one of Jesus' goals on Earth was to restore the understanding of how sinners are re-connected with the Lord...not



through religion and rules, but through faith in Jesus. It's not about what we do. It's about what Jesus has already done, and what the Lord does to and through us now.

This must have been a mind-blowing meeting for Nicodemus. In just a few minutes, Jesus destroyed all the wrong thinking that Nicodemus had been trusting in. Have you ever seen a cartoon or graphic that showed a light bulb over someone's head? - - - When we begin to understand something, we often say something like "the light came on." At the end of their meeting, the light might have been coming on for Nicodemus. It's almost like Jesus saw that happening for Nicodemus. Look what Jesus said at the end of the story.

John 3:19 "This, then, is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. 21 But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God."

It kind of sounds like Jesus was encouraging Nicodemus to leave the darkness of the lies of religion and trying to keep a bunch of rules. It sounds like Jesus was encouraging Nicodemus to come into the light by trusting in Jesus alone. The truth is that Jesus wants us to leave the darkness of religion, and the darkness of trusting in ourselves. Jesus wants us to come into the light of trusting in Him alone. If we trust in Jesus as our Savior, and we serve Him as our Lord "Master," then we will have eternal life, and our sins are forgiven.

John chapter three verse twenty-one was the end of the story about the meeting that Nicodemus had with Jesus that night. We don't know anything else that was said between the two of them, but that wasn't the last that we heard about Nicodemus. You see, the Friday that Jesus died on the cross, another Jewish leader went to the Roman governor and asked permission to take Jesus' body off of the cross. That man's name was Joseph. He was very wealthy, and had been a secret follower of Jesus. The Roman governor's name was Pilate, and he gave Joseph permission to remove Jesus' body from the cross and bury Him...But Joseph didn't do it alone...someone helped bury Jesus. Let's read the four verses from John chapter nineteen that tell us what happened.

John 19:38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus—but secretly because of his fear of the Jews—asked Pilate that he might remove Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took His body away. 39 Nicodemus (who had



previously come to [Jesus] at night) also came, bringing a mixture of about 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes. 40 Then they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the aromatic spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews. 41 There was a garden in the place where He was crucified. A new tomb was in the garden; no one had yet been placed in it. 42 They placed Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation and since the tomb was nearby.

These two very wealthy and powerful men had been secret followers of Jesus while He was still alive. When Jesus died, both Joseph and Nicodemus decided that they would not keep their faith a secret any longer. They treated Jesus' body with great honor.

During His life on Earth, Jesus restored the Roman centurion's paralyzed servant by healing him with just a word. Jesus also restored the understanding of people that being right with God is not based on how many rules we can keep. During His life, Jesus restored people physically and spiritually. Some of them were proud to follow Jesus, and others were scared to follow Jesus. After His death, some of His secret followers decided to not keep their faith a secret anymore. What about you? Which one of the characters from today's stories do you identify with? Are you willing to humble yourself before Jesus and serve Him with your life?

When you trust in Jesus, He forgives your sin, and gives you eternal life. Some of you are ready to trust in Jesus right now. We can talk to God here, today. You can tell God that you want Him to restore your life right now. I can help you tell Him from your heart. I will say the words out loud, but you can just repeat them in your heart. What really matters to God is that you really mean what you say in your heart. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes, so we're not distracted.

If you want to give your life to God by trusting in Jesus right now, then repeat these words in your heart: "Dear God,...I am sorry for my sin...the times I've disobeyed You...I believe that Jesus paid the price for my sin...when He died on the cross for me...I believe that Jesus rose from the grave on the third day...I believe that Jesus is the only way for me to be rescued from my sin...please forgive me right now...I give my life to You...please make me Your child... please help me to be the example for other people to also trust in Jesus...I love You, Lord...in Jesus' name...Amen." If you prayed that prayer, and really meant it for the first time, then raise your hand right now. Don't be shy. We don't ever have to be ashamed of Jesus. In fact we need to always be proud of Him.



Everybody who raised their hand, please stay right here for a few minutes. I'd like to talk with you for just a moment. Everyone else can pick up a Quiet Time Page, and find a quiet place nearby to talk with God and answer the questions. Don't go too far away. I'll call everybody back together in just a few minutes. (Distribute the Quiet Time Pages. Take a few minutes to counsel with those who made decisions. Call the group back together in about five or ten minutes. After Quiet Time, dismiss to Free Time.)

PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021

Quiet Time DAY 2 (Monday or Thursday)

“Jesus Restores When We Are Humble & Hunger For God”

Matthew 5:5-6, 8:5-13, John 3:1-21



Sit quietly and think about the Bible stories today.

Think about the Roman centurion. He was a powerful foreigner, but he humbled himself before Jesus, and trusted in Him. Think about the Pharisee named Nicodemus. He was a religious leader who humbled himself to meet with Jesus. Nicodemus was hungry for the truth. Ask God help you humble yourself to trust in Jesus. Ask God to give you a hunger for the true righteousness that only Jesus can give. Ask God to restore you the way He wants to.

Understand that the Lord loves you so much that He came to Earth and died to pay for your sin. He rose from the grave on the third day so that you could have eternal life. Thank the Lord for loving you so much.

If you have given your life to Jesus, and He has given you eternal life, then take a moment to tell Him thank You for forgiving your sin, and for giving you eternal life.

If you have not received eternal life, then ask God to help you give your life to Jesus. Ask Him to help you talk to your adult sponsor right now about trusting in Jesus. As soon as we dismiss, find your sponsor and talk to them about this. You might want to tell them that you are ready to give your life to Jesus, and you would like their help.

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PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021

Day 3 Bible Story (Tuesday or Friday)

“Jesus Restores Our Hearts By Purifying Us From Sin”

Matthew 5:7-8, John 8:2-11, Luke 5:17-26

Notes to Bible Story Leaders:

1. This lesson has been written so that you could read it as a script, but please remember that it's much better if you don't simply read it to your kids. Know the activities & the lesson beforehand, & engage your kids personally. Use this lesson as a guide. Feel free to be creative & modify or add activities. Feel free to teach this lesson from your strengths in a way that best meets your group's needs.
2. When you see ---, pause for a moment to give kids an opportunity to respond, or answer a question.
3. Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations have been taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. In addition, bracketed words [] may have been inserted by the author in an attempt to help those who might be unfamiliar with some Bible words to better understand the flow of the text. Bracketed words are not intended to change the interpretation of the text in any form or fashion. The Bible text has been italicized for your convenience to more clearly distinguish it from the teaching script. Also, for your convenience, Bible passages referred to but not expressly taught, may have been included at the end of the lesson or in parentheses within the lesson.
4. Please remember to pray that God's Spirit would speak through you to the hearts of everyone who attends this Bible story. May the lost be rescued, & may the rescued be drawn to new depths of love & appreciation for Christ.

Introduction:

Can you remember a time when you needed someone to forgive you? - - - Maybe you did something to someone that was wrong. Maybe you said some things that were mean, and you knew you shouldn't have said those things. Maybe you took something that belonged to someone else. Maybe you were disrespectful to your parents or to your teacher. We all do bad things. From time to time we all need someone else to forgive us...And from time to time we all need to forgive other people for what they do to us.



None of us have absolutely pure hearts. All of us mess up and sin. We all need God to forgive us. The really good news is that Jesus died on the cross to pay the punishment for our sin. We all deserve to be punished for our sin, but Jesus showed what true love is. Jesus allowed Himself to be beaten, spit on, called terrible names, and nailed to a cross. Jesus allowed all of this to be done to Him because He loves us. The even more amazing thing about what Jesus did is when we think about who deserved to die that way, and who did not deserve to die that way. All of us sinners truly deserve the punishment that Jesus took for us, but Jesus didn't deserve any of it. None of us have absolutely pure hearts, but Jesus does. The Bible says that Jesus was tempted in every way that we are tempted to do wrong, but that Jesus never sinned. Jesus was the only person ever to live who did not sin. Jesus is the only person to ever live who had an absolutely pure heart. This truth makes Jesus' love and forgiveness even more amazing. Jesus took the punishment that we deserved, so He could give us the eternal life that only He deserved.

Remember, eternal life and forgiveness of sin are gifts that God offers to us for free...But these gifts were not free. In fact they are the most expensive gifts ever paid for. Jesus paid for our forgiveness and eternal life by dying on the cross for us. That is how much the Lord loves us. These gifts are offered to us, but we must accept them. God gives us the choice to accept these gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. The way we accept God's gift is by turning away from our sin and ourself (repentance)...no longer trusting in how good we can be, but only trusting in Jesus. A lot of people do not accept God's gift. A lot of people tell God, "No thanks." A lot of people think that they can be good enough to get into Heaven. A lot of people think that as long as they are better than other people, then God will let them into Heaven. During the days that Jesus was on Earth, many people thought that too. People believed that because the truth had been twisted. Jesus came to untwist the truth...to restore people's understanding about sin, forgiveness, and eternal life. He also came to restore people's hearts, so they could be made pure by His sacrifice.

In today's two Bible stories, we'll learn about a woman and a man who were both spiritually and physically restored by Jesus. We'll also learn that only Jesus can purify people's hearts, because Jesus is God.

Bible Story:

Before we get to the two people that Jesus restored, let's remember that our theme Bible passage for the week is from Matthew 5. Look in your Bible and find the book of Matthew. Remember, it's in the New Testament. (Allow sufficient time for everyone to find Matthew in their Bible. Adults may need to help their preteens.) Remember, the first part of Matthew 5 is called the



Beatitudes. Jesus spoke those words when He was teaching a large group of people how to be restored. Look in your Bible and read along starting with verse 7. Jesus said,

Matthew 5:7 “The merciful are blessed, for they will be shown mercy. 8 The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God.”

Do you remember our dorm devotional last night? It was about the Good Samaritan. Remember, he was merciful to the man who had been beaten up. In our stories today, we’ll see how Jesus and some true friends showed mercy. We’ll also discover what Jesus was talking about when He said, “the pure in heart...will see God.”

Let’s jump into the first story. Look in your Bible and find John chapter 8. It’s just three books past Matthew. Let’s start reading with verse 2.

John 8:2 At dawn [Jesus] went to the temple complex again, and all the people were coming to Him. He sat down and began to teach them.

Okay, let’s hold it right there. Remember that Jesus lived on Earth two thousand years ago. He lived in the land of Israel. The capital city of Israel is Jerusalem. You can travel there today. During Jesus’ time on Earth, the Jewish people worshiped God at the very special place in Jerusalem called the Temple. It was a very large and beautiful building with different areas. It was also the place where the religious leaders would gather to teach and learn. Remember we talked about those religious leaders yesterday. Remember that Nicodemus was one of those religious leaders, and that he belonged to the group known as the Pharisees. Like we said yesterday, most of the Pharisees didn’t like Jesus. They were actually trying to find ways to get rid of Jesus, and they didn’t like anyone listening to His teachings...But on this day, Jesus sat down in the Temple area and began teaching a large group of people. Look at verse 3.

John 8:3 Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, making her stand in the center. 4 “Teacher,” they said to Him, “this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. 5 In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do You say?” 6 They asked this to trap Him, in order that they might have evidence to accuse Him.

The religious leaders hated Jesus so much that they were trying to trap Him. They wanted to make Jesus look bad in front of all the people. On this particular day, they brought a woman to



stand in front of Jesus and the whole crowd. The woman was a sinner. She had been caught being unfaithful to her husband, and with a man who was being unfaithful to his wife. It's true that this is a very serious sin, but it was also obvious that the religious leaders didn't care about the woman. They just wanted to use her to try to trap Jesus.

This was a very dangerous trap. If Jesus answered them and said, "Yes, she should be killed," then the religious leaders could have Jesus arrested by the Romans. During that time, only the Roman government had the authority to sentence someone to death. The Jewish religious leaders thought that they could get Jesus in trouble with the Romans, if He said the lady should be killed...And if Jesus answered the opposite way, the Jewish religious leaders could make Jesus look bad in front of all the people. The religious leaders misused the law of Moses from the Old Testament that taught that men and women who were unfaithful to their spouse could be killed by throwing rocks at them until they died. If Jesus answered them and said, "No, she should not be killed," then the religious leaders could say that Jesus didn't believe in the Old Testament... Then people wouldn't follow Him anymore. It really was a very dangerous trap, but Jesus did something that the religious leaders never expected. Let's keep reading starting halfway through verse 6.

John 8:6b Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with His finger. 7 When they persisted in questioning Him, He stood up and said to them, "The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Then He stooped down again and continued writing on the ground. 9 When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Only He was left, with the woman in the center.

The religious leaders were trying to get Jesus to answer either one way or the other, but He did something very strange. Jesus just stooped down and started writing in the dirt with His finger. The Bible doesn't tell us what Jesus was writing in the dirt. Some people have had some different ideas, like maybe Jesus was making a list of all the sins that the religious leaders had committed. Others have suggested that maybe Jesus was writing names in the sand. Maybe they were the names of the women that the religious leaders had been sinful with. He might have been writing other Old Testament Bible verses that exposed some of the different sins of the religious leaders. We don't know exactly what Jesus was writing in the dirt, but we know what Jesus said. Jesus said something completely unexpected. Jesus looked at the religious leaders and said, "The one without sin among you should be the first one to throw a stone at her." BAM!!! This was a total mic drop moment. Probably the crowd of people there looked at the religious leaders to see which one of them was going to pick up a rock first. Everyone knew that



even the religious leaders were sinners. If any of them picked up stones to throw at her, then everyone would know that person was a liar. With one very simple statement, Jesus totally destroyed the trap of the religious leaders. This was absolutely incredible!

Then it says that as Jesus returned to writing in the dirt, the religious leaders began leaving one by one. Did you notice in verse 9 which ones started leaving first? - - - The older men. Some people think that maybe they left first because they had lived sinful lives longer than the younger men. Some people think that the older men left first because they were wiser. Maybe they realized that Jesus knew all their sins, and if He wanted to, He could expose all their sins to the crowd. Anyway, all the religious leaders left, and only Jesus and the woman remained there in the middle of the crowd. Look at verse 10 to see what happened next.

John 8:10 When Jesus stood up, He said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, Lord,” she answered. “Neither do I condemn you,” said Jesus. “Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”

Wow! There’s so much here in just these two verses. Jesus kept writing in the dirt until the last religious leader was gone. Then Jesus stood up and spoke to the lady for the first time. The woman was in danger of losing her life, but Jesus asked her if anyone was left to condemn her. All the religious leaders were gone. Did you notice what the woman called Jesus? - - - Right, she called Him “Lord.” Remember that’s what the Roman centurion called Jesus too. Just like the Roman centurion, this sinful woman humbled herself before Jesus. Jesus’ response was to forgive her. Jesus did not condemn the woman for her sins. Instead, He told her that He didn’t condemn her. What’s really amazing about that was that Jesus was the only one qualified to throw stones at her. Jesus was the only one who was without sin. Jesus had never done anything wrong, so when He said that the person without sin should throw the first stone, He understood that He was the only one who could throw a stone...But rather than throwing rocks at the woman, He forgave her...He showed her mercy.

Not only did Jesus show mercy to the woman, but by forgiving her, Jesus purified her heart. He told her to ***“Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”*** This was Jesus’ way of saying, I know that you have done wrong. I know that you have sinned very badly. But I forgive you. I now cleanse you of your sin, and purify you spiritually. Now go live a life that honors God. Jesus restored this woman spiritually and physically by forgiving her sins and giving her a new life. Remember, the only way for our hearts to be made pure is for Jesus to forgive us and purify us.



One of the amazing facts about this story is that what the religious leaders intended for evil, Jesus was able to turn around for good. Those men did not like the woman, and they did not like Jesus. They drug her in front of Jesus and the crowd in order to humiliate her and try to trap Jesus. They wanted only bad things to happen to both the woman and Jesus. This is a really big contrast to our next story. Turn backwards in your Bible just one book to the Gospel of Luke. Go to chapter 5. This story took place in a different place. This story didn't happen in Jerusalem at the Temple. This story took place in a house in a small town...But of course the Pharisees and other religious leaders were there too. Let's see what happened. Start with verse 17.

Luke 5:17 On one of those days while [Jesus] was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea, and also from Jerusalem. And the Lord's power to heal was in Him. 18 Just then some men came, carrying on a mat a man who was paralyzed. They tried to bring him in and set him down before Him. 19 Since they could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on the mat through the roof tiles into the middle of the crowd before Jesus.

Did you see what I meant about this story being a big contrast to the other one? - - - This time it wasn't hateful religious leaders that brought someone to Jesus trying to hurt them both. This time it was friends who loved their friend so much that they carried him on a mat and brought him to Jesus. The friends were true friends. They knew that their friend was paralyzed...he couldn't walk. They knew that Jesus could help their friend. They were determined to get their friend to Jesus no matter what it took.

It says that the house was so crowded, and there were so many people outside, that they couldn't get in. Those friends were so determined that they climbed up on the roof, and made a hole in the roof big enough to lower their friend down in front of Jesus. Can you imagine how surprised the people in the house were when suddenly sunlight started shining through the roof? - - - Stuff was probably falling into the house. People probably moved out of the way. The friends carefully lowered their friend down into the house so Jesus could heal him...And of course the religious leaders were watching and listening very carefully to see what Jesus would say and do. Let's keep reading.

Luke 5:20 Seeing their faith He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."



Whoa, whoa. Did Jesus misunderstand the reason why they brought the paralyzed man to Him? - - - Of course not. Jesus knew that even though the man was paralyzed, his greatest need wasn't physical, but spiritual. Jesus knew that the man and his friends truly trusted in Jesus, and because of this, Jesus healed the man in the most important way: spiritually. Jesus purified the man's heart and forgave his sins. Something important for us to remember is that only God can forgive sins. This story reminds us that Jesus is God. Let's see what happened next.

Luke 5:21 Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to think: "Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Of course the religious leaders were shocked that Jesus would say that the man's sins were forgiven. The religious leaders did not believe that Jesus was God. They thought that Jesus was just a man. They thought that when Jesus said the man's sins were forgiven that Jesus was speaking "blasphemy." "Blasphemy" is when you say something very bad against God. The religious leaders did not understand that Jesus was 100 percent man and 100 percent God in flesh.

Did you notice in verse 21 that it says that the religious leaders were just thinking these thoughts? - - - That's super important. They didn't say this out loud. It was just what they were thinking. Look what happened next.

Luke 5:22 But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus replied to them, "Why are you thinking this in your hearts? 23 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

Jesus could read their thoughts. He knew exactly what they were thinking. Only God can really know someone's thoughts. Jesus is God. Something else that's interesting about what the religious leaders were thinking is that they were right about the fact that only God can forgive sins. Jesus asked them a very important question in verse 23: ***"Which is easier: to say 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"*** Of course the easier thing to say is "Your sins are forgiven you." Nobody can see if someone's sins are really forgiven. Nobody can see that someone's heart has really been purified...But if you say to a paralyzed person "Get up and walk" then the person better get up and walk. Everybody can see if a paralyzed person can suddenly walk. As we read what happened next, remember that Jesus often called Himself the "Son of Man." Let's look at it. Jesus said,



Luke 5:24 *“But so you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He told the paralyzed man, “I tell you: Get up, pick up your mat, and go home.”*
25 *Immediately he got up before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. 26 Then everyone was astounded, and they were giving glory to God. And they were filled with awe and said, “We have seen incredible things today!”*

With one statement, Jesus restored the man’s physical health. With this same statement, Jesus proved to the crowd and the religious leaders that He really was God in human flesh. How do you think the paralyzed man felt? - - - How do you think his friends felt? - - - How do you think his family felt when he returned to his house? - - - We don’t know exactly how the religious leaders felt, but it does say that “everyone was astounded, and they were giving glory to God.” Some people have wondered if maybe Nicodemus, the man we learned about yesterday, might have been one of the Pharisees there that day. We don’t know for sure, but what we do know is that Jesus restored the paralyzed man spiritually and physically. Jesus had mercy on him. Jesus forgave his sins. Jesus purified his heart. Jesus healed him both spiritually and physically.

Did you notice the very last line of verse 26? It says that the people were “filled with awe and said, ‘We have seen incredible things today!’” Not only did they see a paralyzed man healed and be able to get up and walk, but they also saw a man’s sins forgiven. Not only did they see a man’s sins forgiven, but they also got to see God in human flesh. This must have been super incredible for them. It’s a reminder to us about what Jesus said in our theme verse for today, **Matthew 5:8** *“The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God.”*

Let’s remember that in both of these stories, Jesus healed the people spiritually. He forgave their sins and purified their hearts. The woman caught in adultery called Jesus “Lord” or “Master.” The paralyzed man and his friends believed in Jesus. We can be restored spiritually too. We can also have our hearts purified by Jesus. The Bible is very clear about this. As we have already said before this week, we must repent (turn away from our sin, our self, and even trying to be good enough), and we must trust only in Jesus. We must stop trying to be our own master. We must humble ourselves before Jesus, and ask Him to be our Master, our Lord, our Savior. Jesus offers us eternal life and forgiveness of sin. This is a free gift to us, because Jesus already paid the price that we owe.

Jesus died on the cross to make the way for us to be rescued from our sin, and for us to receive eternal life. Jesus died on the cross on a Friday. Remember that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus carefully removed Jesus’ body from the cross. They carefully and respectfully



wrapped Jesus' body and put it in Joseph's tomb. They did all of that before sundown on Friday. Jesus was in the tomb Friday night, all day Saturday, and then on Sunday morning...what happened? - - - Right! Jesus rose from the grave. He was resurrected. Jesus' life was restored! Jesus conquered our sin on the cross, and He conquered our death at the tomb. Jesus came back to life so that we could have eternal life. If we repent of our sin, and put our trust in only Jesus, then He gives us this eternal life. Jesus also wants us to bring other people to Him. Just like the friends brought the paralyzed man to Jesus, we should bring our friends to Jesus too. We can do this by telling them about Jesus. We do this by explaining to them that they are also sinners, and that God loves them so much that He came to Earth as a man (Jesus). That He is the only one ever to live a perfect life, and that even though He did not deserve to suffer and be executed, He allowed this to happen for us because this was His plan to restore us to a friendship relationship with God. We need to tell our friends, our family, and everyone we meet that God loves them this much. We need to help people who are hurting. We need to have mercy on them. We need to help people who are sinning. We need to have mercy on them. We need to help people who need to be restored, because Jesus is the only one who can restore them. Jesus is the only one who can forgive their sins and purify their hearts...And just like Jesus said, ***"The pure in heart are blessed, for they will see God,"*** some day when we get to Heaven, we will see Jesus face-to-face.

What about you? Are you willing to humble yourself before Jesus and serve Him with your life? Are you ready to be restored spiritually? When you trust in Jesus, He forgives your sin, and gives you eternal life. Some of you are ready to trust in Jesus right now. We can talk to God here, today. You can tell God that you want Him to restore your life right now. I can help you tell Him from your heart. I will say the words out loud, but you can just repeat them in your heart. What really matters to God is that you really mean what you say in your heart. Let's bow our heads and close our eyes, so we're not distracted.

If you want to give your life to God by trusting in Jesus right now, then repeat these words in your heart: "Dear God,...I am sorry for my sin...the times I've disobeyed You...I believe that Jesus paid the price for my sin...when He died on the cross for me...I believe that Jesus rose from the grave on the third day...I believe that Jesus is the only way for me to be rescued from my sin...please forgive me right now...I give my life to You...please make me Your child... please help me to be the example for other people to also trust in Jesus...I love You, Lord...in Jesus' name...Amen." If you prayed that prayer, and really meant it for the first time, then raise your hand right now. Don't be shy. We don't ever have to be ashamed of Jesus. In fact we need to always be proud of Him.



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Quiet Time DAY 3 (Tuesday or Friday)

“Jesus Restores Our Hearts By Purifying Us From Sin”

Matthew 5:7-8, John 8:2-11, Luke 5:17-26

Sit quietly and think about the Bible stories today.



Think about the how embarrassing it must have been for the woman who was brought before Jesus. Think about how Jesus wrote in the dirt, and how He did not get trapped by the leaders. Think about how merciful Jesus was to the woman. Think about the friends who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus, and how Jesus set him free spiritually and physically. Think about friends that you have who need to be restored by Jesus. Pray for them.

Understand that the Lord loves you so much that He came to Earth and died to pay for your sin. He rose from the grave on the third day so that you could have eternal life. Thank the Lord for loving you so much.

If you have given your life to Jesus, and He has given you eternal life, then take a moment to tell Him thank You for forgiving your sin, and for giving you eternal life.

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Matthew 5:4, 9:18-19, 23-26

Bedtime Dorm Devotion - Night 1 (Sunday or Wednesday)

“Jesus Restored A Little Girl’s Life & Comforted Her Parents”

Today was a pretty happy day. We got to come to camp, have fun with our friends, and worship God...but not every day is a happy day. Some days are really, really sad. When someone we love gets sick, or when someone very close to us dies, it hurts our hearts. We worry about people that we love. We cry when they die. When we’re sad like that, we call it grieving or mourning. In Matthew chapter 5, Jesus said **“4 Those who mourn are blessed, for they will be comforted.”** Just a few chapters later, Matthew told a story of a time when Jesus was at Matthew’s house and teaching a lot of religious leaders when **“9:18 ...suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before [Jesus], saying, “My daughter is near death, but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.” 19 So Jesus and His disciples got up and followed him. 23 When Jesus came to the leader’s house, He saw the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly. 24 “Leave,” He said, “because the girl isn’t dead, but sleeping.” And they started laughing at Him. 25 But when the crowd had been put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. 26 And this news spread throughout that whole area.”** That was a very sad day for the girl’s parents. Their little girl was very sick and died, but they believed that Jesus could restore her life, and He did. All the people in the crowd laughed at Jesus because they did not believe in Him, but her parents believed. Can you imagine how her parents felt when she got up and was completely healthy? Can you imagine how shocked the people in the crowd were when the little came back to life? They had to go tell everyone.

This true story had a very happy ending, because Jesus restored the girl’s life. Her parents were comforted because they got their daughter back. Her parents knew that Jesus had power over sickness and death. Jesus is more powerful than any disease, and He is more powerful than death. It’s sad when someone we love is sick, and it’s very sad when they die...But the Bible teaches us that someday Jesus is coming back, and when He comes back, He will raise all the dead people back to life. Everyone who gave their life to Jesus, and lived their life for Jesus, will have eternal life in Heaven forever. In Heaven, there will be no more sickness and no more sadness. Until that wonderful day comes, we need to live for Jesus. Not everyone who we love will get well here in this life, but for those who follow Jesus, they will all be restored in the next life. Close your eyes. Let’s talk with God. “Lord, thank You for loving us. Thank You that Heaven is a wonderful place with no sickness and no sadness. We look forward to living there with You forever. Please help us get plenty of rest tonight so we can give You our very best tomorrow. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

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PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021

Matthew 5:7, Luke 10:25-37

Bedtime Dorm Devotion - Night 2 (Monday or Thursday)

“Jesus Restored Love By Telling A Story Of Mercy”

In our camp theme Bible passage Jesus said, *“7 The merciful are blessed, for they will be shown mercy.”* God shows us mercy because He loves us, and offers us forgiveness through Jesus. He wants us to show other people mercy too. Listen to this story from *Luke 10:25 Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 “What is written in the law?” He asked him. “How do you read it?” 27 He answered: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. 28 “You’ve answered correctly,” He told him. “Do this and you will live.” 29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” 30 Jesus took up the question and said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. 34 He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him. When I come back I’ll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.’ 36 “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” 37 “The one who showed mercy to him,” he said. Then Jesus told him, “Go and do the same.”*

Jesus told this story because a very religious man, an expert in the Jewish law, tried to trick Jesus. Jesus knew that the religious man was happy to keep a bunch of rules, because it made him feel like he was better than other people. Jesus told the story to show that one of the most important ways we can truly love God is by truly loving other people. In Jesus’ story, the priest and the Levite (the two very religious people) were not loving to the man who was hurt...But the Samaritan man sacrificed his time, his safety, and his money to show mercy to the man who was hurt. We can show love to others by showing them mercy. Maybe we won’t find someone beat up in a ditch, but we find other people all the time who have been beat up in their hearts. Let’s pray.

“Dear Lord, please help us to find people who are hurting...And Lord, please help us to love them the same way You love us. Thank You for being merciful to us by giving us forgiveness through Jesus. Please help us to sleep well tonight, so we can give You our very best tomorrow. You deserve it. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”

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PowerPlus Preteen Camp 2021

Matthew 5:9-12, 26:69-75, John 21:15-19

Bedtime Dorm Devotion - Night 3 (Tuesday or Friday)

“Jesus Restored Peter So Peter Could Help Others Be Restored”

Our week of camp ends tomorrow. We'll have a lot of exciting stories to tell our family and friends when we get home, but we need to remember that not everyone will be excited to hear about what the Lord has done in our lives. Some people might even be mean to us, but we need to remember that Jesus has restored us to love other people and bring them to Him...even when that means that they are hurtful to us. Listen to what Jesus said at the end of our theme Bible passage. *Matthew 5:9 "The peacemakers are blessed, for they will be called sons of God. 10 Those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. 11 You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of Me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you."* This might happen to us, but we need to be strong so we can help other people have peace with God. Did you know that one of Jesus' very best friends, named Simon Peter, was very scared on the night that the religious leaders arrested Jesus? Peter was so scared that three different times he told people that he did not even know Jesus. Peter was afraid of what those people might do to him. After Jesus was killed on the cross, and buried, and came back to life, Jesus appeared to Peter several times. Peter was embarrassed because he had been ashamed to say he was Jesus' follower, but Jesus had great plans to use Peter to bring many people to be restored. Listen to what happened on one of those mornings: *John 21:15 When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said to Him, "You know that I love You." "Feed My lambs," He told him. 16 A second time He asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" "Yes, Lord," he said to Him, "You know that I love You." "Shepherd My sheep," He told him. 17 He asked him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved that He asked him the third time, "Do you love Me?" He said, "Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You." "Feed My sheep," Jesus said. 18 "I assure you: When you were young, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don't want to go." 19 He said this to signify by what kind of death he would glorify God. After saying this, He told him, "Follow Me!"* Jesus loved Peter and restored him so that Peter could share Jesus with many people. Eventually, thousands of people would give their lives to Jesus because Peter told them about Him. Maybe the Lord wants to use you like Peter. Let's pray. "Dear Lord, thank You for camp, but thank You most of all for restoring us. Please help us to bring our friends and family to You so they can be restored too. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

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