

Jesus Helps People in Need



SABBATH—AUGUST 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Luke 1:46–55; Luke 4:16–21; Matthew 12:15–21; Matthew 21:12–16; Isaiah 53:3–6.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me. He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor. He sent me to tell prisoners that they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. He sent me to free those [people] who have been treated badly [hurt by other people] and to announce that the time has come for the Lord to show his kindness [loving care]’ ” (Luke 4:18, 19, ERV).



Jesus' waking up from the dead gave us everlasting life.

JESUS came to show us who God is. Jesus' teachings show us God. So does His death on the cross. He showed us God by the way He lived. Many things Jesus did made real changes in other people's lives.

God's special messengers, His prophets, wrote about Jesus' life and His work. Jesus Himself told His people about the work He came to do (Luke 4). Jesus cared for the poor. He helped people who were hurt by their leaders. Jesus showed the people love. The Old Testament prophets did these same things too.

But the religious leaders in Jesus' day did not feel the same way about the poor. They feared Jesus. They were afraid He would take away their power. So, the leaders arrested Jesus. They put Him to death. Jesus' death on the cross shows us that sin is very evil. But Jesus woke up from the dead. He won the war against sin. He saved us. His waking up from the dead gave us everlasting life.

MARY'S SONG (Luke 1:46–55)

Make a picture of this story in your mind: the angel Gabriel comes to Mary. He tells her she will be the mother of Jesus, God's own Son! Mary does not tell anyone. She goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth is soon going to have a baby too. This baby is a miracle because Elizabeth is an old woman. The Holy Spirit tells Elizabeth about Mary's baby before Mary says anything about it. Together, these women celebrate God's promises to them.

Read Luke 1:46–55. Do you see that Mary praises God in these verses? She says, “ ‘Yes, the Powerful One has done great things for me’ ” (Luke 1:49, ERV). Why should our worship of God include praises to Him? Why should we thank Him for both the big things and the little things?

Mary's song is beautiful. Mary is filled with thankfulness to God. She has seen God work in her life. But she also is aware of God's bigger plan for her people and for all humans.

Mary understands that God loves to show His people mercy. He cares very much for poor people. God also cares about people that no one thinks are important. Soon after the angel tells Mary the good news about Jesus, she starts praising God. She sings, “ ‘He has taken rulers down from their thrones. He has put those [people] who are in a place that is not important to a place that is important. He has filled those [people] who are hungry with good things. He has sent the rich people away with nothing’ ” (Luke 1:52, 53, NLV).

Luke 1:43 tells us that Jesus is the Lord. But Jesus is not the same as other leaders. Jesus' kingdom is different from the kingdoms on this earth too. In Jesus' kingdom, rich and powerful people are **not** the most important people. In Jesus' kingdom, God lifts up the poor and the needy. He fills them “with good things” (Luke 1:53, NLV).

The church shows us who God is and the love that is in God's heart. We also can learn about God's kingdom from Mary's song. How well does the church show us the kingdom that Mary sings about?



The angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will be the mother of Jesus, God's own Son.

JESUS ANNOUNCES THE WORK HE WILL DO (Luke 4:16–21)

Jesus includes Isaiah 61:1, 2 in His first public sermon in Luke 4:16–21. Jesus' sermon is short. When Jesus is done, He says, " 'While you heard me reading these words just now, they were coming true!' " (Luke 4:21, ERV).

Jesus includes Isaiah 61:1, 2 in His sermon to help the Jews understand His work. Jesus' sermon is another way of explaining what Mary said about Jesus 30 years earlier in her song. We see from Jesus' sermon that both the poor and hurting people are important to Jesus. He brings His Good News to them.

In His sermon, Jesus says the verses in Isaiah 61 help to explain His special work on earth. Yes, Jesus' work for God was spiritual. But His work also included making people's lives better. Jesus wanted to show that our spiritual lives and our everyday lives are not as separate as many people think. Jesus wants our help in His plan to save people. He wants us to help Him take care of people too.



Poor and hurting people are important to Jesus.

Compare Luke 4:16–21 with Luke 7:18–23. In these verses, why do you think Jesus answered John the Baptist's followers the way He did? If someone asks you about why Jesus is the Savior, how will you answer? What answer will you give for why you believe Jesus is God?

Jesus sent out His followers to do His work on earth. He told them to announce that " ' "God's kingdom is now very near" ' " (Matthew 10:7, ERV). Jesus also told His followers to " 'Heal the sick. Bring the dead back to life. Heal the people who have leprosy [bad skin diseases]. And force demons out of people. I give you these powers freely, so help others freely' " (Matthew 10:8, ERV). Jesus wanted the work that His followers did to show the important rules of His kingdom. Jesus' followers worked with Jesus to invite other people to join His kingdom. Jesus' followers lifted up the people who were not important in other people's eyes. Jesus' followers lifted up the people who were poor and lost.

We must preach the Three Angels' Messages to the people on this earth. Why must we always remember this important duty while we take care of the needs of the poor?

JESUS HEALS PEOPLE (Matthew 12:15–21)

There are many stories in the Bible about Jesus' miracles. Isaiah told us about these miracles hundreds of years before they happened. Jesus made the blind see. He healed people who were sick. Sometimes these people were sick for many years before Jesus healed them (read Mark 5:24–34; John 5:1–15). Jesus made lame people walk again. He healed lepers. Lepers were people with awful skin problems. People in Jesus' day looked down on lepers because they were "not clean." People were afraid to come near the lepers or touch them. But Jesus healed them with a touch. Jesus saved people from demons too. The demons controlled people's minds and bodies. Jesus also woke up people from the dead.

Jesus often told the people He healed not to tell anyone He healed them. Many people did not do what Jesus asked. Why did Jesus want no one to know? Jesus' miracles were not about showing off His power. He also knew His power made the religious leaders jealous. Jesus healed people because He wanted them to accept His gift of everlasting life.

Jesus also healed people because He wanted to show His love for humans. Jesus showed His love for humans when He fed 5,000 people. Matthew tells us, "When Jesus got out of the boat, he saw a large crowd of people. He felt sorry for them, and he healed the ones who were sick" (Matthew 14:14, ERV). Jesus felt the pain of the people who were hurting because they were sick and in trouble. Jesus always tried to help everyone He met and healed them.

Read Isaiah's words in Matthew 12:15–21. Jesus' healing miracles were about more than healing sick people. What was Jesus also trying to do when He healed people?

"Jesus' miracles showed that He was God. He did the work that God's special messengers talked about. But Jesus' works of mercy made the religious leaders mad. They did not feel pity for people in pain. Many times, the religious leaders caused the suffering that Jesus stopped. That is why the leaders did not like Jesus' miracles."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 406, adapted.

Jesus' healing miracles showed His love. They showed that He was fair and kind. But they also showed that Jesus came to save the ones He healed. Everything Jesus did was to lead people to accept everlasting life (read John 17:3).



People were afraid to come near the lepers or touch them. But Jesus healed them with a touch.

JESUS STOPS THE BUYING IN THE TEMPLE (Matthew 21:12–16)

What are some of your favorite stories about Jesus in the Bible? Do you like best the stories about how Jesus heals people? What about the stories that show Jesus' love for children? Or do you like reading Jesus' sermons the best? Or maybe you enjoy most what Jesus has to say about saving people and about God's kingdom? All these stories show us the gentle and caring side of Jesus. But there also are stories about Jesus that show Him taking strong action against wrong practices. One example is the time that Jesus stops the people from buying and selling in the temple.



Jesus stops people from buying and selling in the temple.

Read about the story of Jesus clearing out the temple in Matthew 21:12–16; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48; and John 2:13–17. Do you see that all four writers include this story about Jesus in their books? What does that tell us about this story? How important do you think it must be?

This story is very powerful. Clearly, Jesus cared about the temple and worship. He was sad when His people replaced true worship with selling animals. Those animals were a word picture for Jesus' own death on the cross. But the people selling the animals did not remember that. They cared more about making money.

Jesus is doing the same work in this story that God's special messengers did in the Old Testament. Jesus is trying to change things for the better. He wants to turn the people back to God and true worship. Do you see that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John write the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Psalms in their stories about Jesus clearing out the temple? That is because Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John want to show people that Jesus is doing the work of one of God's prophets. Prophets are special messengers. The people in the temple see that Jesus is a prophet (read Matthew 21:11). They come to Him after He chases the businessmen and bankers out of the temple. What does Jesus do after He chases these men away? He heals the sick and teaches the people. The people feel hope grow in their hearts as Jesus teaches them. The religious leaders see that Jesus is a prophet too. But the leaders are afraid that Jesus will end their power. So, they want to kill Jesus. That is just what the leaders in the Old Testament did to the prophets in their day.

THE CROSS OF JESUS (Isaiah 53:3–6)

God cares about the poor. He hears their cries. That thought gives us comfort. Here is another wonderful thought. God the Father understands the worst that humans can do to each other. Our Father in heaven felt Jesus' pain on the cross. So, He knows that this earth can be a very evil place that is not fair at all. Just look at what happened to Jesus. Jesus lived a holy life. He did good and showed people love. But evil people hated Him and killed Him. They killed Him because they were jealous of Him.

Make a picture in your mind of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is night. Soon, evil men will arrest Him. Then He will stand in court. Mean men will judge Him. Jesus will be beaten. Soldiers will make fun of Him. Paul tells us, "He gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He was born as a man and became like [the same as] a servant. And when he was living as a man, he humbled [became the same as a servant] himself and was fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused his death—death on a cross" (Philippians 2:7, 8, ICB). The story about God's plan to save us is beautiful. But we must remember it has ugly parts too. People were very mean and full of hate. They hurt Jesus and were not fair to Him.

Read Isaiah 53:3–6. What do these verses tell us about what happened to Jesus? Jesus was innocent. But He died for the guilty. How does this idea help us understand better what He did for us on the cross?

In Jesus, God knows how it feels to be someone who is hurt by evil people who are not fair. People get upset about an innocent man getting killed. But how should we feel when we think about what happened to Jesus? Jesus died to make us one with God again. Jesus' death allowed God to join Himself to us in our weakness. That is why God can understand our weaknesses and help us. So, we cannot doubt His pity, love, and mercy to us. "Jesus, our high priest [religious leader], is able to understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted [Satan tried to get Jesus to sin] in every way. He was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, but he never sinned" (Hebrews 4:15, ERV). Wow! Look at everything Jesus did for us! Truly, He shows us how much God loves us.



In Jesus, God knows how it feels to be someone who is hurt by evil people who are not fair.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Ellen G. White, “In the Footsteps of the Master,” pages 117–124, in *Welfare Ministry*; “Days of Ministry,” pages 29–50, in *The Ministry of Healing*; “The Temple Cleansed Again,” pages 589–600; “In Pilate’s Judgment Hall,” pages 723–740, in *The Desire of Ages*.



“Some people . . . think God is too full of mercy to punish the sinner. But these same people need to look at the cross of Calvary.”

“God clearly shows us in the Bible that He will punish the people who break His law. Some people do not really believe this Bible truth. They think God is too full of mercy to punish the sinner. But these same people need to look at the cross of Calvary. The death of the innocent Son of God shows us that ‘when people sin, they earn what sin pays—death’ [Romans 6:23, ERV]. Every time we break God’s law, we must pay the price—death. But Jesus, who did not sin, became sin for us. He accepted the guilt of our sin on Himself. His Father hid His face from His Son when that happened. That broke Jesus’ heart. It crushed His life. Jesus made Himself an offering for our sins to save us. There was no other way for God to free us from the punishment of breaking His law. Every person who refuses to accept Jesus’ death on the cross must die for his own sins.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [worldwide] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, pages 539, 540, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Read the Ellen G. White statement above. Talk with your class about how people on this earth are not fair. Think about Jesus who was innocent and who paid the price for the guilty! Why must we always remember this truth?
- 2 Think about everything that the Father did to save us. He sent Jesus to this earth to die for us. Jesus was innocent. But He died for sinners anyway. That means He died for each one of us. Why should Jesus’ death on the cross for us make us new people? How does He make us new?