

THE BEATITUDES

LESSON 3: SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

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In this last lesson of the series on the Beatitudes, the children will discover how Christians can be faithful and strong in what they believe, even when being persecuted and mocked by those who do not believe.

TOPICS

Beatitudes, Persecution, Spiritual Growth, Stand Firm, Strength

OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE (5 minutes)

Praise and worship are an important part of a believer's life and children often learn best by watching and repeating what they see. So please, praise and worship together.

SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION (15 minutes)

Introduction:

When you hear the word decay, what do you think of? (Allow for answers). Decay means to slowly fall into ruin. To go from something good to utter destruction. Did you know this world is also decaying? The devil would like nothing better than to see us destroyed with the rest of the world. That's why he tries his best to keep us from following Jesus. Jesus said anyone who follows after Him will be insulted and persecuted. But we should not be discouraged, since Jesus Himself suffered, and so did the prophets before us. As believers, if we stand strong, God's everlasting rewards will be far greater than what the decaying world can offer.

Matthew 5:10-12 (NIV) (The Beatitudes about Spiritual Strength)

Discussion Questions:

The children will not likely know the answers to these questions but let them give their responses before explaining the meaning of each verse in a way they will understand.

1. Do a lot of you have best friends? How would you describe their strengths and their weaknesses? ***(Let the children describe the strong and weak things about their friends)***
2. Are your best friends' keepers, meaning no matter what other kids say about them, you will still be their friend? Why? ***(Allow for discussion.)***
3. If someone said bad things about your best friend, how would you defend them? ***(Allow for discussion.)***
4. How about Jesus, is He your friend? ***(Allow for discussion.)***
5. Many people will make fun of you, saying Jesus isn't real and can't be a real friend you can play with. How will you defend Jesus? ***(Read John 20:29 together)***
6. Why is it actually a blessing to be insulted or made fun of because of Jesus? ***(Because God promised an everlasting reward to those who are strong in their faith.)***
7. How can we be strong enough to tell others about Jesus, and not be afraid or ashamed? ***(Remember that God is more powerful than anyone or anything and if we want to do God's will, He will protect us and give us the power we need. Read Jeremiah 1:8 together)***

CLASS EXERCISE (15 minutes)

Spiritual Strength (See Video)

SUGGESTED PARENT/CHILD ACTIVITY

Strength of Many (See page 2)

APPLICATION (4 minutes)

God's promise of blessings and rewards is sometimes hard to understand. We know about physical rewards that we can see and touch, but these are gifts that the world offers. We can buy them, like bicycles and boats, or get them as gifts like "sweaters" but these things will fade away. Over time, they will decay. No toy lasts forever. Even antiques will someday no longer exist. Eventually, every physical thing is destroyed by rain, floods, fire, or even moths.

Some relationships, or friendships can also end, such as when people move away, or when a pet dies. But God's love for us is everlasting, and nothing can take that away from us if we stand firm to what we believe. Insults and persecution will not last forever, but God's love will. And our greatest reward if we stand firm to what we believe is the promised Kingdom of Heaven.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

STRENGTH OF MANY

The Body of Christ is stronger and more effective when everyone pitches in.

TOPICS:

Body of Christ, Giving, Strength

MATERIALS:

Roll of toilet paper

DURATION:

Approximately 5 minutes

WHAT YOU WILL DO:

You will demonstrate the strength of toilet paper when wrapped around a volunteer's wrists many times. First ask for a volunteer, and have him or her hold both wrists together as you wrap the toilet paper around only a few times. The volunteer can easily separate his or her wrists. You will compare this to when just a few believers give a small amount to the church. Next, you will wrap the paper around the volunteer's wrist about twenty or thirty times. He or she will not be able to separate his or her wrists. This you will compare to many people giving a small amount to the church.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

Today, I want to demonstrate how even a very small gift to the church can make a difference. I need a strong volunteer.

What I want you to do is put your wrists together. Here I have a roll of toilet paper. Toilet paper is not very strong is it? It tears easily. Now, let me wrap this toilet paper a few times around your wrists. (Wrap the paper around one time.) This is like when only a few people give a small amount to the church. Can you separate your wrists? (Allow the volunteer to do so, and then have the volunteer put his or her wrists together again.)

What happens when many people give a small amount to the church? (Wrap the paper around the volunteer's wrists about twenty or thirty times, using children's names or people they know as examples of people who give as you wrap.)

Now, can you separate your wrists? (The child will try but will not be able to. Unwind the paper quickly after the point has been made so you do not frighten the child.)

You may think that your gift cannot make a difference, but no gift is too small. When many people give even a small gift, like when we wrapped the toilet paper around many times, the gift becomes very strong and important. God is pleased when everyone helps out.

