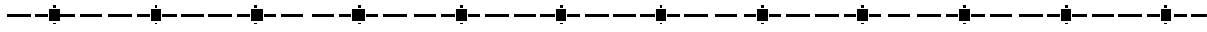


GOD'S BIG PLAN

God's Big Plan Explained Luke 24: 13-43

Supporting Scriptures: Mark 16:12-13; John 20:19-31 • Acts 13:26-38; 1Corinthians 15:1-7
Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22; Exodus 12; Exodus 25:8; John 1:14; John 2:18-22



Lesson Goals: To see that God keeps His promises.
To see that God made a way for us to come to Him by sending His Son.
To see that with faith, we can believe, even if we can't see.

Scripture Memory The people who have faith in me without seeing me are the ones who are really blessed!
John 20:29 (CEV)

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Don't read it. Tell it as a STORY. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

The Lesson: Let's review what we have learned so far. (Review the previous stories, focusing on those leading to Christ's death and resurrection. Encourage your students to share.)

Who remembers what day it was that Jesus shared a special meal with His disciples? (Thursday.) And what day did Jesus die on the cross? (Friday.) Did Jesus stay in the cave? (NO!) Jesus came back to life, didn't He? If that happened on the third day, what day was it? (Sunday.) It's the day we celebrate as Easter. Did anyone see Jesus alive that morning? (Yes.) Who was it? (It was Mary Magdalene.) What did Mary do once she saw Jesus? (She ran and told the disciples.) So, did everyone believe that Jesus was alive? (No, they didn't.) Let's continue our story and see what happened next.

READ: Luke 24:13-16 (Hold your Bible open throughout the story.)

So, there they were, these two men, followers of Jesus, traveling back home from Jerusalem. They were from the village of Emmaus. One of them was named Cleopas. We don't know the name of the other follower, but we do know that they had been in Jerusalem. They had probably gone to celebrate the Pass-over, like so many other people. They were sad because of all that had happened in Jerusalem over the weekend.

As they were walking together and talking about all those things, Jesus came up to them and walked with them. But God kept them from being able to recognize Jesus in His new resurrection body. "What are you talking about?" Jesus asked Cleopas and his friend. They stopped and Cleopas answered, "You must be visiting. Otherwise you would know what has happened over the past few days." Jesus played along, "What has happened?" "It's about Jesus of Nazareth," they told Him. "He was a prophet. He was sent here from God, but our leaders handed Him over to the Romans to be nailed to a cross. We had hoped that He was the Promised One from God, the One we've been waiting for, but it's already been three days since they killed Him. Although some of our women came to us with an amazing story. They got up early this morning and went to the tomb, but Jesus' body wasn't there. They saw angels who told them that Jesus was alive. After that, some of our friends ran to the tomb and found it empty, just like the women had told us." Then Jesus told His companions, "You don't get it, do you? Don't you remember what God's Word says? This had to happen. The Christ had to suffer these things." And then, Jesus started with the books of Moses and then the Prophets. Jesus explained to them what was written there about Him.

Remember the very first people God created and their disobedience. God punished them, but in that punishment was a promise that one day their descendant, Jesus, would crush Satan's head. Jesus defeated Satan with His death and resurrection. Remember Abraham and his long awaited son, Isaac. When God tested Abraham, he was willing to sacrifice his own son, showing that one day, God would do the same. Abraham believed that God could bring his son back to life. Abraham didn't have to kill Isaac because God provided a ram who was caught in the bushes. In the same way, God provided His Son. Think back to Israel's slavery in Egypt. What was God's last sign, the one that caused Pharaoh to let the people go? All of the people had to take a lamb for themselves. And all together, on the same night, they killed the lamb. The lamb's blood painted around their door was a sign to God to save them. Sin is slavery. Freedom comes by choosing to believe and follow Jesus, the Lamb of God. The leaders and others called for His death. He was nailed to a cross where He shed His blood, giving His life for all who will believe. Remember the traveling church and the temple. God wanted to live among the people. One day, God came into the world He created and took the form of flesh and blood, a baby. He grew up and walked among the people, teaching, healing and serving. And who could forget King David? God promised him that from his family would come One who would be God's Forever King. That One is Jesus.

There are many other stories, too, that talk about how Jesus would come back to life after dying. Remember back to when Jesus walked into the temple and found people buying and selling. He told them, "Destroy this temple. I will raise it up again in three days." But they didn't understand because it had taken forty-six years to build this temple. But Jesus wasn't talking about the building. Jesus was talking about the temple of His body. He was telling them that when they killed Him, He would come back to life!

Well, after so much talking, Jesus and the two men arrived at the village. Cleopas and his friend invited Jesus to stay with them and have a bite to eat. Jesus agreed. As they sat down, Jesus took the bread and broke it, just like He had a thousand times. Then He gave it to His followers, and in that moment, His followers knew who He was! They recognized Him by something He had done for them many times. But then He disappeared from their sight. "How did we not know it was the Lord," they said. "Couldn't we tell something was different about Him by how He taught us?" The two men got up immediately. They walked all the way back to Jerusalem to find the eleven disciples. "It's true," they shared. "He really is alive!"

Review:

Let's review what you have learned. Who would like to retell the story? (Ask your group if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

Over and over again, God had prepared us for Jesus. He promises something and then He keeps those promises.

On that same Sunday evening, as the disciples were still talking about what Cleopas had told them, Jesus walked right into the room. Thomas wasn't there and didn't believe. When Jesus visited them again, Thomas finally believed because He could see Jesus and touch His hands. But Jesus said something pretty amazing to Thomas. "You believe because you have seen Me. The people who have faith in me and believe in me without seeing me are the ones who are really blessed."

Do you know what that means? Well, can you see Jesus? Can you walk beside Him? Can you touch His hand? No, you can't. And neither can I. But we can believe - even if we cannot see, yet. When you have faith, you believe that what God says is true, even if you can't quite understand. Will you place your trust in God today, believing that He sent Jesus, just as He said He would? You'll be really blessed!

Planning for Next Week
Lesson 43 • Jesus Goes Back to Heaven
Matthew 28:16-20

PRESCHOOL LESSON

SING: “Everyday With Jesus”

SHARE: The last couple of weeks we have talked about Jesus dying on the cross and Mary and her friends finding the cave empty. Mary saw Jesus, but the men couldn’t quite believe.

On that very same day, the day Jesus came back to life and talked to Mary, there were two men, followers of Jesus, who were traveling back home from Jerusalem. They were from the village of Emmaus (E-may-us). One of them was named Cleopas. We don’t know the name of the other follower, but we do know that they had been in Jerusalem. They were sad because Jesus was dead.

As they were walking together and talking about everything that had happened, Jesus came up to them and walked with them. God kept them from being able to recognize Jesus. “What are you talking about?” Jesus asked Cleopas and his friend.

They stopped and Cleopas answered, “You must be a visitor; otherwise you would know what has happened over the past few days.” Jesus played along, “What has happened?” “It’s about Jesus of Nazareth,” they told Him. “He was a prophet. He was sent here from God, but our leaders handed Him over to the Romans to be nailed to a cross. We had hoped that He was the Promised One from God, the One we’ve been waiting for, but it’s already been three days since they killed Him. Some of our women came to us with an amazing story. They got up early this morning and went to the tomb, but Jesus’ body wasn’t there. They saw angels who told them that Jesus was alive. After that, some of our friends ran to the tomb and found it empty, just like the women had told us.” Then Jesus told them, “You don’t understand? Don’t you remember what God’s Word says? This had to happen. Jesus had to suffer these things.” And then, Jesus started with the books of Moses and then the Prophets. Jesus explained to them what was written there about Him.

After so much talking, Jesus and the two men arrived at the village. Cleopas and his friend invited Jesus to stay with them and have a bite to eat. Jesus agreed. As they sat down, Jesus took the bread and tore it, just like He had a thousand times. Then He gave it to His followers. Then His followers knew who He was! They recognized Him by something He had done for them many times. Then, Jesus disappeared from their sight. “How did we not know it was the Lord?” they said. “Couldn’t we tell something was different about Him by how He taught us?” The two men got up immediately. They walked all the way back to Jerusalem to find the eleven disciples. “It’s true,” they shared. “He really is alive!”

Cleopas and His friend walked with Jesus and talked with Him. You and I may not be able to walk beside Jesus the way they did, but you and I can talk to Jesus any time. Talking to Jesus is called prayer. And you can tell Jesus anything you want to. He wants to hear from you.

PRAY: Thank you, God, for listening to me.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - Play “Hangman” with verse, but instead of building the gallows as letters are missed, give points instead for letters guessed correctly. Talk about not seeing the verse, at first, because there were only spaces. Discuss faith being belief in something, even when we don’t quite understand.
- Play “Concentration” with Old Testament Prophecies that pointed to Jesus. Rather than doing two copies of each, match the Old Testament prophecy to its New Testament fulfillment. For example: Match Satan’s crushed head with a picture of Jesus dying on the cross.
- Make cardboard sandals. Loosely trace your student’s feet onto cardboard. String the sandals with yarn.
- Bring small, individual loaves of bread for snack.
- Take a walk outside and tell the story, if possible.
- For older students and adults: Talk a little more about Jesus’ resurrection body. Read John 20:19 and Luke 24:36-43. Talk about how Mary and Cleopas did not recognize Jesus immediately, not until He did something very familiar (calling Mary’s name, and breaking bread). Also, discuss Jesus entering a locked room but not being a ghost. He further showed that He was no ghost by having them touch Him. He also ate in their presence. Talk about why you think His resurrection body would still have scars.