

THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

The Mar Thoma Church

Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos
Diocesan Bishop



Sinai Mar Thoma Center
2320 S. Merrick Avenue
Merrick, NY 11566
Tel: (516) 377-3311
Fax: (516) 377-3322
marthomadiocese@gmail.com
www.marthomanae.org

FOREWORD

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

It gives me great pleasure that the Sunday School of our Diocese is bringing out a new and revised edition of the Sunday School Curriculum.

People often question the relevance of a Sunday school curriculum of our own, when a number of books are readily available in the market, published by different churches and agencies. But the parents and teachers of our Diocese felt the need for a curriculum which would help the child to study the Bible more deeply and to know more about the faith and practices of our church, taking into consideration the time and place in which they live. Therefore, the pioneers of the Diocesan Sunday School have put in great effort to develop a curriculum, conducive to the culture and practices of the land, without sacrificing the faith, heritage and value system of our church. Moreover, instead of merely teaching the facts, they have designed the activities for each lesson keeping in mind the teaching methodology of this Diocese.

We are grateful to all who worked tirelessly in making it possible and especially for their commitment and vision. Revisions were made many a time considering the feedback from teachers and parents. We do acknowledge all who dedicated their time and talent for bringing out this revised version. I hope this edition will benefit our children and help them get new insights into the fundamental teachings of the Bible, and the faith and practices of the church.

The motto of our Sunday school is 'Come to Jesus, Bring Every Child to Jesus'. It is my prayer that through these lessons, our children may come to a personal encounter with Jesus, make a commitment to follow Him and bring others to His fold.

May God's blessings be with you all!

Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos
Diocesan Episcopa
July 2018



Acknowledgment

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! 2. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, 3. things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. 4. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. Psalm 78:1-4

God bless our Sunday school teachers who take the time and effort each week to prepare and teach each lesson with love and patience.

The Diocese owes a debt of gratitude to the many Sunday school teachers who made this book possible. I wish to take a moment and thank Dr. T. M. Thomas and team for the first edition, Mrs. Shiby George, Mr. Tom Philip, and team for the current edition. Also wish to thank the Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam, Rev. Ninu Chandy and Mrs. Madhu Blessy with all the help this year.

I thank our Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos for the guidance, leadership, and vision with the curriculum and Sunday school. Also wish to thank Rt. Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Theodosius for the current curriculum. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Diocesan Sunday School Council members Rev. Larry Varghese, Mr. Thomas Easo, and Mr. George Babu for their commitment and dedication.

We are doing our best in being open and collaborative in all our efforts. The channel of communication is through the Diocese regional representatives, superintendents, and office bearers. The regional representatives have done a great deal of work with the Diocese exam preparations, exam evaluations, VBS, regional conferences, and mission activities.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, 21. to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

In His Service!

Reji Alexander

Secretary, Mar Thoma Sunday Schools
[Diocese of North America]
marthomanae.ss@gmail.com

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UNIT 1 : Lesson 2

AIM: To understand the moral standards that God wants us to follow in our daily life

Theme: God's Moral Standard for Life



God's law for His people

Exodus 20: 1-17 (NRSV)

¹ Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;

³ you shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation [b] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.

⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work.

¹⁰ But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.

¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹² Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ You shall not murder.

¹⁴ You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

¹⁶ You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷ You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Student Introduction

What does the rule tell about parents?

Which class room rule do you like most in your school?

Explain what happens when a driver fails to stop for school children? How do you like the traffic rules?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

In the book of Exodus we read the story of God's chosen people and their deliverance from the slavery of the Pharaoh of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Today we are going to learn more about the standards of God.

Once the rescue took place, God revealed that His people's new identity would involve living under a new standard of conduct. God was about to "lay down the law", revealing to his people distinguishing aspects of His own identity as well as aspects of their new identity as His people.

Like Israel, we have been rescued from the bondage of Satan and our slavery to sin.

*God has set a moral standard that expresses His character. (Ex. 20; 1-2) Here God is communicating (through Moses) to His people about His expectations of them. These are the words of God; they carry the authority and importance of the Author. (God).

*God's law teaches us how to relate to God and others. (Ex.20.3-17).

*The first four commandments focus on our relationship with God. (Ex.20:3-11) *The last six commandments focus on our relationship with others. (Ex. 20:12-17)

The Ten Commandments of Moses are a set of common sense rules that are important and relevant for everyone- yesterday, today and tomorrow. They are not just prohibitions and regulations, but a grand plan for life in this universe to live properly and happily. They carry the authority of God Himself.

Let us now discuss the commandments one by one.

1. No other God. "You shall have no other God before me". There is only one God, one source and one creator. Put God first in our life. We all are the children of God, in a broader sense, brothers and sisters. (Matt.4.10)
2. The Right God, the Right Way. "You shall not make any graven-". Do not worship any other idols, images or objects either in earth or heaven. (Let the children or the teacher name some gods or objects people worship now a days, eg. Money, education, power, position.) (1 John 5:21)
3. Name above all. "You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God". Do not use God's name for selfish greed or need, or any other purpose which is not intended to be used. (Tit. 2:5)
4. Work and Leisure. "Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy". This is the day for God, His worship, mercy and rest. It is a day for ceasing from work, a day for relaxation and recuperation, to relax and rediscover God's grace and mercy. (Heb. 4.4) The first four commandments teach us to love God, the last six teach us to love our neighbors (fellow humans). (All these commandments have very extensive meaning which was given by our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ref. these from the New Testament for

further discussion) Matt. 5:17.

5. Respect of authority. “Honor your father and mother-----God is giving you.” The heart of the fifth commandment is receiving the gift of life by respecting our parents in the faith. Respect and honor our parents as well as all the legitimate authority. (Matt.19:19, Eph. 6:2)
6. To live and let live. “You shall not murder”. The goal is preservation of life. Life is precious and it is given by God in His own image. (Matt.19:18, Rom. 13:9)
7. The Joy of Married Life. “You shall not commit adultery”. This commandment protects and respects the married life. It forbids any kind of sexual immorality that violates the covenantal relationship of marriage. Every act of sexual immorality is an offensive act against God and our relationship with Him. Lust is also a sin. (Matt. 19:18, Rom. 13:9)
8. What is mine is God’s. “You shall not steal”. A Godly attitude towards property and the livelihood of others. What I have, is given by God or is the gift of God, and I will share it with His people. We are obliged to tithe for the extension of His kingdom. (Malachi 3.8-10); Matt.19:18; Rom. 13:9)
9. Tell the truth. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Every one condemns lying. There can be no justice without truth. God forbids every kind of falsehood, including half truths, flatteries, fibs, intentional omissions, deletions, exaggerations, misinterpretations, rumors etc. Our communication should be grounded in the character of God. (Matt. 19:18, Rom. 13:9)
10. Being Content. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” God wants us to be on guard against covetousness. One’s life does not count or consist on the abundance of his possessions. (Luke. 12:15, Rom. 13:9, Rom. 7:7). We are not content; we crave, because of our sinful desire. Coveting is wanting something that someone else has, something that is not rightfully ours. It is impossible to keep all the laws according to the way God wants. We are sinners by nature. That is why the law leads us to the gospel, the gospel of grace received.

Faith in Action

Let us worship and praise the Savior, Lord Jesus Christ. Let us express the nature of our God by loving and caring for others. We can be more zealous and steady in our relationship with God and our fellow beings.

We can be contented with what we have. We can share our resources with others. We can be thankful to our parents, elders, teachers and other people who are instrumental for the growth of our life.

MEMORY VERSE

- 1 Then God spoke all these words:
- 2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;
3. you shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20:1-3

Activities

Questions for Discussion:

- Q: Why do many people have a deep aversion to the Ten Commandments?
 - Q: How can we demonstrate that God's moral standard is rooted in love?
 - Q: How does understanding God's intention behind the law help us in our desire to be obedient?
 - Q: How does this keeps us from reducing the law to just rules and regulations?
 - Q: How has disobedience in one area of your life led to disobedience in other areas?
 - Q: What freedoms are we given through the Ten Commandments?
- You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.



Lesson review

1. What are the two Major classifications of the Ten Commandments? How do they relate to each other?
2. What is the fifth commandment? Explain briefly.
3. What is the last commandment? How can it be applicable to our present day life?
4. How can we apply these commandments in the present context in our lives?

Prayer

Lord, our heavenly Father, thanks for your Law that was given to us through your servant Moses. Enable and strengthen us to follow and apply these laws in our everyday life by the help of your Holy Spirit. Lord help us to strengthen our relationship with you and our fellow beings. Thanks for your son Jesus Christ and the grace that we are experiencing in our day to day life. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.



Thought for the day

“The Law is like a set of railroad tracks, the track provide no power for the train but the train must stay on the tracks in order to function. The law never gives any power to what it commands, only the gospel has power, as it were to move the train.

Quote by Tullian Tchividjian

UNIT 1 : Lesson 3

AIM: To understand God’s covenant with Abraham and its blessings for all.

Theme: God’s covenant with Abram



God’s Covenant

Genesis 15: 1-6 (NRSV)

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”

² But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.”

⁴ But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.”

⁵ He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

⁶ And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 17:15-27 (NRSV)

¹⁵ God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶ I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

¹⁷ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”¹⁸ And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live in your sight!” ¹⁹ God said, “No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him.

²⁰ As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. ²¹ But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.” ²² And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

²³ Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very day, as God had said to him. ²⁴ Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. ²⁵ And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

²⁶ That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised; ²⁷ and all the men of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

Student Introduction

What words or phrases do people use when making serious promises?

How do people feel and say when a promise is broken by a very trusted person?

Can you imagine that we are enjoying the blessings of a promise made thousands of years ago?

This promise, known as the ‘Covenant’, was made between none other than God Himself and Abraham. The promise was never broken or outdated.

Let us learn the details of this unbreakable contract between God and Abraham.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Abram had just won a surprise victory over the kings he fought with. They had taken his nephew Lot and family captive. So Abram had no choice but to battle the kings to rescue his nephew. But he knew the kings could come back at him at any time and attack. He was full of such thoughts and was frightened.

God spoke to him in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great. The assurance “I am your shield” guaranteed Abraham that God’s invisible shield will protect him against any possible attack. In addition to this God promised Abram that he would have a great reward.

Abram was a wealthy man already. What he lacked, was a son as his heir. Knowing his current disappointing condition he let God know that he had no children. His constant worry was that a slave born in his house would be his heir. Abram opened up his heart to God and prayed complaining to God about his circumstances. His words clearly show his lack of understanding about God’s plan for him. But it was helpful for many others who lived later. We have read in Psalms about various people complaining to God about life’s negative experiences. Such Psalms encourage us to pour out hearts to God and complain as we go through our own struggles.

At this point Abram was still learning the basic lesson that God’s delays are not denials. God had promised Abram a son but he was waiting too long for the baby’s arrival. It agonized him to watch the children of others growing up. One great thing about Abram is that still he continued to trust what the Lord had said. The Lord who knew Abram’s need called him outside of the house and said: “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to number them”. You have learned from your science classes that there are billions of galaxies and millions of stars in each of them. Even with the most updated Hubble Telescope, astronomers cannot figure out the exact number of stars. There was no way Abram could count all the stars.

And he believed the Lord (15:6). Interestingly the Hebrew verb ‘believe’ and ‘amen’ come from the same root. It means the security of a faithful and committed relationship. Of course Abram had more reasons to doubt than believe.

To begin with, Sarai was childless and beyond the child-bearing age. And Abram himself was too old to have a son. The situation was as hopeless as it could be. But still Abram was convinced deep inside him that the Lord's words are true and will come to pass. Therefore, Abram discarded all the factors working against him, and expected a son of his own. He was hoping against hope. It is recorded in Romans 4:21 that he was 'fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised'. The Lord would give him physical as well as children of faith every century in all the nations (Romans 4:16-17)

Abram's trust in God teaches us that we need to respond to the gospel with faith. Abram was powerless and so he had to look to the power of the One who had promised him. Similarly we too need to depend on God's power to obey the gospel message. The promise did come true after many years of waiting. The foundation for faith is that God always keeps His word. God accepted Abram's faith: "He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (v.6).

God spoke to Abram again (17:1-6) and revealed more details about the covenant. As Abram fell on his face in worship God said to him, ⁴ "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. ⁵ No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. ⁶ I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you".

Sarai will also have a part (17; 15) in the covenant. Just as He changed Abram's name into Abraham, her name will be changed to Sarah meaning princess. In effect she will be mother of many nations. Kings will come from here. God's promise of a son was not through a substitute wife - Sarah learned that through the hard way. In God's mind she should be the mother of the promised son. Change of name here is a sign of the covenant. It meant a change of personality and a very different life in the future.

It was just too much for Abraham who is now ninety nine years old. God knew he needed reassurance and confirmed that Sarah herself would bear him a son. God even revealed the son's name: Isaac ('he laughs'). Abraham had laughed when God broke the details of the promise. In the next appearance God extended the covenant to Isaac who is yet to be born of Sarah (19-22). Isaac is brought to the level of a participant in the original covenant: "I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him" (v.19b). The heirs of covenant are Abraham's descendants through Sarah only. That means the children of Isaac.

Though not included in the covenant, God blessed Ishmael, Abraham's son from Hagar. Ishmael's people will live under the blessing of God for He said: "I will make him into a great nation," (v.20b).

In obedience to God's command Abraham circumcised all male members of his household. This reminds us of Abraham's willingness to walk before God and be blameless. This was expected of Abraham.

God chose Abraham and his descendants not because they were in any way greater than other people. It was not even after he started to fulfill the requirements of the covenant. The Scripture tells that God's righteousness was reckoned to Abraham just as he trusted God even before he was circumcised (Gen. 15:6; 17:23-24). Faith was what God required then and that has not changed in our time. The Scriptures clarify this in Romans 4:11. Faith comes first. Circumcision was a sign that Abraham already had faith in God. Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Activities

Questions for Discussion:

- Q: Abraham stood up for his nephew Lot. Do you think we have the responsibility to rescue those who are in Satan's (sin's) bondage? Explain your answer.
- Q: Do you know of any experiences in your life when God blessed you with something impossible?
- Q: What quality makes Abraham our spiritual father?
- Q: We often say "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;" what do we mean by this?



Lesson review

1. God spoke to Abraham when he was afraid of his enemies and gave words of encouragement and hope.
2. Every time God spoke to Abraham, He added more details of the covenant and reassured him.
3. Sarah had a very important part in the covenant; kings will come from her.
4. The unborn Isaac was brought to the level of a covenant partner.
5. In God's working out of blessing, there are often delays that are designed to teach us patience and help us grow in faith.
6. We should never forget that God always keeps His promises.

Values for life

Just as Abraham had to go through struggles to grow in faith, we too have to live through various trials and tribulations to grow in our faith.

God chose Abraham though he was weak and was slow in spiritual growth; that offers us hope.

God revealed the details of the covenant little by little. Similarly we have to learn the Scriptures a little at a time. So, it becomes necessary to actively engage in private and corporate worship on a regular basis. No matter what our present circumstances are, God always keeps His promises.

Faith in Action

- ✘ Start recording in your journal God's promises that God is fulfilling in your life.
- ✘ Remember and write some of God's blessings in a sheet of paper.
- ✘ Try to keep your faith in God even in negative circumstances.
- ✘ While in worship service, remember how reverently Abraham worshipped God by falling on his face.

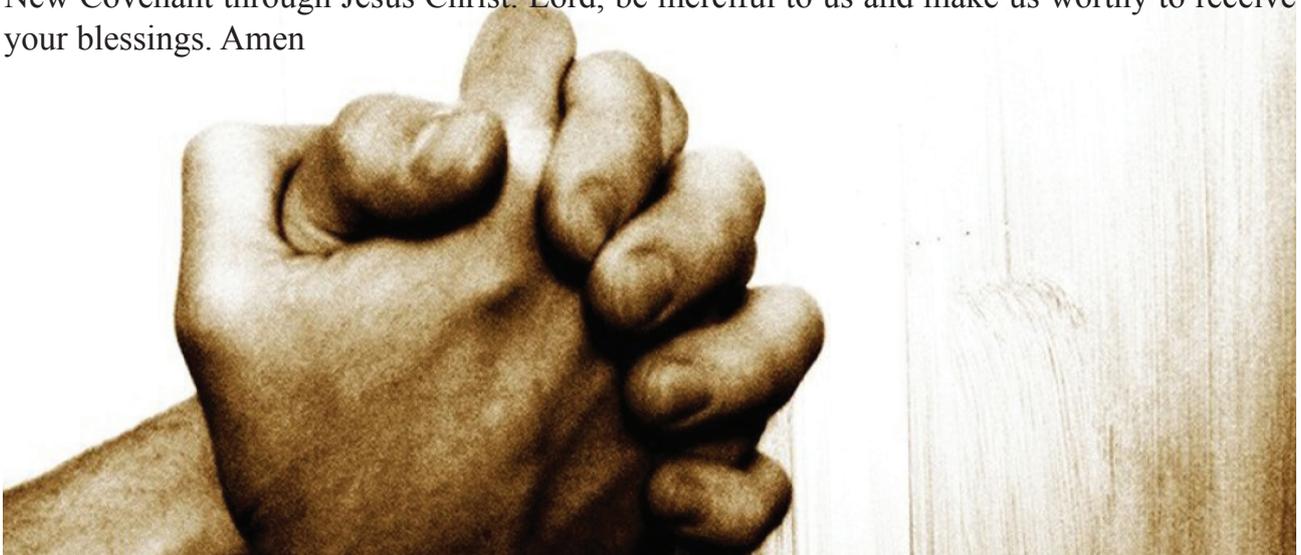
MEMORY VERSE

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son.

Hebrews 11:17

Prayer

Gracious Lord, you are the God of Father Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You have spoken to Abraham in his deep need and blessed him. You have continued your covenant relationship with Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants. We thank you for all the blessings through the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. Lord, be merciful to us and make us worthy to receive your blessings. Amen



UNIT 2 : Lesson 4**AIM:** Importance of Forgiveness in Christian Life**Theme:** Joseph Forgives

God's Providence

Genesis 45 (NRSV)

¹Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Send everyone away from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ²And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. ³Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’ ¹²And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. ¹³You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.” ¹⁴Then he fell upon his Brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

¹⁶When the report was heard in Pharaoh’s house, “Joseph’s brothers have come,” Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. ¹⁷Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your animals and go back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Take your father and your households and come to me, so that I may give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you may enjoy the fat of the land.’ ¹⁹You are further charged to say, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. ²⁰Give no thought to your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’” ²¹The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons according to the instruction of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions

for the journey. ²²To each one of them he gave a set of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five sets of garments. ²³To his father he sent the following: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. ²⁴Then he sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving he said to them, “Do not quarrel [a] along the way.”

²⁵So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. ²⁶And they told him, “Joseph is still alive! He is even ruler over all the land of Egypt.” He was stunned; he could not believe them. ²⁷But when they told him all the words of Joseph that he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. ²⁸Israel said, “Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go and see him before I die.”

Student Introduction

Answer the following questions:

1. How does your relationship with your family members differ from your friends?
2. Do you treat your siblings the way you like to be treated?
3. In today’s lesson, we learn that we have something in common with our Heavenly father.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

There was a great famine in the land of Canaan. There was no rain for a long period of time. So crops and other sources of food were dying due to the drought. Jacob could not find enough food to feed his large household. He came to know that there was plenty of food in Egypt. Jacob told his sons to make a trip to Egypt and see if they could buy food. **Genesis 42:2-3 (NRSV)** ²I have heard,” he said, “that there is grain in Egypt; go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die.” ³so ten of Joseph’s brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.

His brothers had no idea that Joseph was the Prime Minister of Egypt.

Well aware of the famine in the surrounding areas Joseph was not surprised that his brothers came to buy food from Egypt. Joseph had not forgotten his brothers who had thrown him into a well and later sold him to slavery because he was the most loved and favorite of Jacob. **Genesis 37:4 (NRSV)** ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to Him’.

But Joseph wanted to reconcile with his brothers as the situations in life had changed for both Joseph and them. He was now in a position where people would bow down to him including his brothers who had come down to buy food.

Joseph revealed himself to his brothers and comforted them saying that it was not them but God who had sent him to Egypt to preserve God's people. Joseph had forgiven his brothers. He lets them know that there is still five more years of famine. They were to go back fast to their father's house and only take the possessions that they could move with ease and leave the rest back in Canaan and to return to Egypt at the earliest and settle down in Egypt.

Joseph's exaltation from Slavery to the office of the Prime Minister did not make him proud. He gave full glory to God for his providence and exaltation. Joseph knew that all the events in his life were the plan of God.

Activities

Questions for Discussion:

- Joseph forgave his brothers. As Christians we are instructed to forgive others and reconcile. What does it do to us and others?
- God exalted Joseph from slavery to the position of Prime Minister. What changes typically happen to the character of such a successful person in our time?
- What qualities of Joseph impress you the most?
- Joseph repaid evil by doing good, are we to do the same? ('Hint:' Romans 12:21)

Lesson review

Joseph recognized his brothers.

Joseph reconciled with his brothers.

Joseph acknowledged God's purpose.

Joseph revealed to them there is still five more years of famine.

Joseph sent his brothers back with supplies instead of detaining them.

Joseph prepared a place for his father, and brothers to live in Egypt.

Value for life

- Importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- God's purpose for our lives is always at work.
- Exaltation in life comes from God; we need to give him all the glory.
- Be faithful in carrying out the responsibility that God has given you.

Faith in action

Start recording in your journal people who have hurt you and you have forgiven.

Remember and write some of God's blessings on your family.

Give God the glory as his plan is at work in your life in every situation.

Be faithful and fruitful.

Thought

Without faithfulness one can't be fruitful.

MEMORY VERSE

Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.

Genesis 50:20

Prayer

Gracious Lord, we thank you for the families you have placed us in. Thank you for your providence, give us a heart to forgive others. Help us to be humble when you exalt us. Change us in such a way that we will be a blessing to our family and society. Amen.

UNIT 2 : Lesson 6

AIM: To understand the purpose of God's call and submitting to His will

Theme: Response to God's call



Speak - Your servant is listening

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (NRSV)

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. ² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶ And the LORD called again, "Samuel!" And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ And the LORD came and stood forth, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for thy servant hears."

Student Introduction

Your name is the most important possession you have. Your own name is the sweetest sound you would ever hear. You feel good when your family members, teachers or a classmate call your name. No one likes to be called "hey". You have heard students saying "I've a name!" Before someone calls your name he or she must know your name. Does God know your name? Names are very important to God. He knows every single star that is out there and calls them by each by name! (Psalm 147:4: NIV) And he takes their count. You have already learned about God calling "Moses! Moses!" at the burning bush. Moses quickly answered: "Here I am." (Exodus 3:4) No one forgets the little man on the sycamore tree. Jesus looked up on the tree and said: "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." He did come down real fast (Luke 19:5)

Today we want to learn how God called a boy named Samuel.

Every one probably would have heard the name of Samuel's mother - Hannah. It is a very popular name in our time too. Her name means 'grace'. Hannah and Elkanah, her husband, lived in the small town of Ramah. For several years she did not have any children, and people

picked on her for that. More than anything else, she wanted a son and prayed to God pouring out her heart. God heard her prayers and gave her Samuel. As she promised to God, when the boy was old enough, she took Samuel to the temple and presented him to Eli, the priest. Thus Samuel began to serve in the temple under Eli.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

The Book of Samuel clearly shows the call of Samuel direct by God and He revealed His plans to Samuel about the people of Israel. Until this time, the primary revelation to the people had been through the priesthood. In this book Samuel is called by God as a boy, made him a prophet, priest and judge.

With the call of Samuel, God began a new era of revealing His word through prophets. The nation's spiritual weak condition, and the decadent nature of Eli's high priesthood, are indicated by the fact that a word from God was "rare" in those days.

Eli realized that it was the voice of the Lord, and advised him to respond "Here I am", which is the right response to God's call.

Seven Things Jehovah did to noteworthy in Jehovah's call of Samuel:

1. Called Samuel (V.4)
 2. Called Samuel again, second call. (v.6)
 3. Called Samuel a third time (v.8)
 4. Came to where Samuel was (V.10)
 5. Stood like any other person and spoke to Samuel (V.10)
 6. Called Samuel by name -all three times.
 7. Spoke to him in an audible voice (v.11 and 12)
- A. Samuel doesn't recognize God's voice. He ran to Eli: Samuel was an obedient boy. He was wrong in thinking Eli spoke to him, but he was right in what he did. Samuel came to Eli quickly because he knew Eli was blind and might need help.
- B. And the LORD called yet again: When speaking to us, God almost always confirms His word again and again. It is generally wrong to do something dramatic in response to a single "inner voice" from the LORD. If God speaks He will confirm, and often in a variety of ways.
- C. Samuel did not yet know the LORD: Samuel was a godly and obedient boy, serving God wonderfully. Yet, he had not yet given his heart to the LORD. Even children raised in a godly home must be converted by the Spirit of God.
- D. Speak, LORD, for your servant hears: Eli gave Samuel wise counsel. Eli told Samuel to:
- Make himself available for God to speak (Go, lie down)
 - Not be presumptuous about God speaking (if He calls you)
 - Respond to the word of God (Speak, LORD)
 - Humble himself before God and His word (Your servant hears)

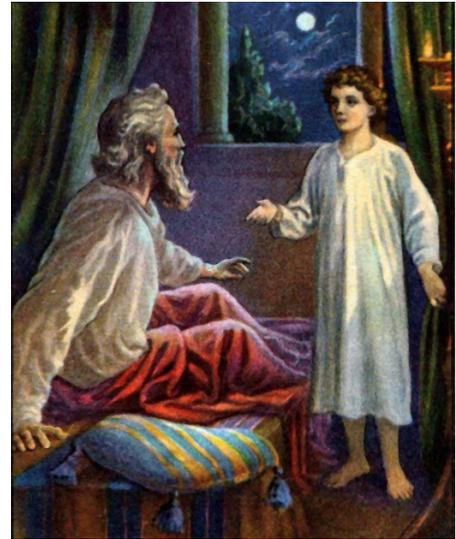
E. Speak, LORD: We must hear from God. The preacher may speak, our parents may speak, our friends may speak, our teachers may speak, and those on the radio or television may speak. That is all fine, but their voices mean nothing for eternity unless God speaks through them.

Activities

Questions for Discussion

Imagine that you were Samuel.

- How would you react?
- How would you respond to God's call?
- How does God call people today?



Lesson review

1. Who kept calling out to Samuel?
2. Why did Samuel keep running to Eli?
3. Why did God choose Samuel?
5. Explain how God called Samuel and what was his response to the call?
6. What did the Lord say to Samuel when he responded to God's call?
7. Discuss Samuel's family background?
8. What are the qualities you find in Prophet Samuel?

Values for life

- Need to understand and recognize God's call
- Know the will of God in our daily life (Romans 12-15; Matt. 5-7)
- Make it a habit to seek His will through earnest prayers for God hears our prayers
- Be patient when answers are 'delayed' and be willing to take 'no' for an answer from God; our Heavenly Father knows best

Faith in action

1. What are the 3 qualities of Samuel that you can apply in your life?
2. How will you respond to God's call?

MEMORY VERSE

Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." *1 Samuel 3 : 10*

Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for teaching us through this lesson about your call of Samuel. You called him when he was still a child. We too want to listen to your call. May be, in your mind there is something special for each one of us to do. Thank you for this lesson so that we can answer your call saying "Here I am." In the most precious name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen



References:

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UNIT 2 : Lesson 7

AIM: To understand the purpose and commission of Jonah's call and his response

Theme: Rebellion against God's call



God's calls Jonah

Jonah 1:1-17 (NRSV)

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, ²Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.' ³But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

⁴ But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. ⁶The captain came and said to him, 'what are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.'

⁷ The sailors* said to one another, 'Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, 'Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?' ⁹'I am a Hebrew,' he replied. 'I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.'

¹⁰Then the men were even more afraid, and said to him, 'What is this that you have done!' For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them so. ¹¹ Then they said to him, 'What shall we do to you that the sea may quieten down for us?' For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. ¹²He said to them, 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quieten down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.' ¹³Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them. ¹⁴Then they cried out to the LORD, 'Please, O LORD, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man's life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.' ¹⁵So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶Then the men feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. ¹⁷*But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Student Introduction

No one would be surprised if during the evening news there was a story about a man who swallowed a fish. If there was a story about a fish swallowing a man, it would be head line news and all over the internet.

Today's lesson is based on the first chapter of the Book of Jonah. It focuses on how a person's disobedience to God caused difficulty in his life and the lives of others.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Let us go through the lesson and try to understand what God wants to teach us today from this portion. The Lord commissioned Jonah to go at once to Nineveh. v.1 It was a commission by God. His assignment was to cry out in the city about their wickedness and preach to them for their repentance. But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord- running away from God. He got into a ship going to Tarshish. The Lord created a great wind upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up.

The mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw out the cargo that was in the ship, into the sea. But Jonah who had gone down to the lower deck of the ship and fell fast sleep.

The captain and the people asked Jonah:

- “How is that you are sleeping”?
- “Get up and call on your god”.
- “Why has this calamity come upon us”?
- “What is your occupation”? (What is your mission?)
- “Where do you come from”? -Your root.
- “What is your country”?
- “Of what people are you”? - He was a Hebrew
- “What is this that you have done”? - Disobeying the Lord.
- “What shall we do to you”?

Jonah agreed and accepted that this calamity came upon the innocent people, because of his disobedience to God's call. He asked them to throw him into the sea. God appointed a whale to swallow up Jonah. Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.



Activities

Cause and Effect

- Choose some examples of how a person's negative actions affects the innocent others. (Drunk driver's action causes accident killing innocent people, speaking unkind words about others hurts them). Allow students to share their views and experience.
- Line up dominos so that by pushing down the first one all the dominos will be knocked down. The bad choice or the wrong action of one person will affect the whole group or the whole community.

Lesson review

1. What did God ask Jonah to do?
2. Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh? Explain.
3. Where did he go?
4. What happened to Jonah?
5. How long was he in the belly of the fish?

Values for life

Our actions against the will of God will cause problems and difficulties in our lives and in the lives of others. If we repent and turn back to God He is gracious to forgive and redeem us and others from destruction and trouble. We have a great responsibility to pray and preach the word of God for people of all creed and color. God's love is all merciful and gracious enough to save them.



Faith in action

1. God knows what is best
2. Let us strive to fulfill God's will in our lives

MEMORY VERSE

"I called to the LORD out of my distress and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice." *Jonah 2:2*

Prayer

Dear Father, we thank You for the many blessings that You have showered on our lives. Help us to grow in You and to be ready to accept Your calling. We know that You know what's best for our lives and that You have a plan. Let our faith grow so that we have full trust in You and Your plans. **Amen.**