

Pray From the Heart

Key Verse:

“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

James 4:6

Extra: Look at Matthew 6. What else can you find out about prayer?

Level 4 lesson 25

Read Luke 18:9-14 and Matthew 6:5-15

Prayer - talking to God - is really the most amazing privilege. In prayer, we can approach the Almighty, Living God and bring our praise, worship, thanks, and all the concerns of our human hearts, to Him. But how should we pray? Is there a right way? Jesus once told a story, about two men who prayed to God in very different ways. Let's see what we can learn...

These two men went into the Jewish Temple to pray. They were very different: one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisees were the highly respected, religious leaders of the Jews. They were rich, well-educated, and always wore expensive clothes. They liked to be seen praying loudly in public and often made a big show of giving lots of money to the poor.

On the other hand, the tax-collectors were on the other end of the social scale - despised by everyone! They collected taxes for the Romans and it was common knowledge that they cheated and robbed their own people in order to make themselves rich! Some people would have been surprised to even see a tax-collector in the temple! The strange thing is, at the finish of this story the Lord Jesus said that this man "went home justified!" So what happened?

Firstly, notice how the Pharisee prayed: "God, I thank You that I am not like other men!" He really meant he was better than everyone else. Do you think he was as good as he thought he was? No! He had a sinful heart, full of pride, selfishness, and self-righteous boasting. Although he talked a lot and could speak so



easily, in his heart he was far from God. Jesus said about this man, "He prayed with HIMSELF" - his prayers didn't even reach God! His prayer was all about himself: "I" and 'me' are all the way through! He didn't praise and thank God or offer Him any worship at all!

He was proud, with no sense of his own need of pardon or cleansing from sin. In fact, he seemed to think he didn't need God's help in any way and he certainly didn't pray for anyone else! This is not the way to come to God in prayer; no wonder he went away without any blessing!

So how should we pray? Well, we saw the other man bowed humbly before God on his knees; he couldn't even raise his head! He must have felt very guilty for he simply cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" There was no self-righteousness or pride in his prayer! He humbly asked for God's help and forgiveness and he got it! God heard his prayer, forgave him, cleansed away his sin, and blessed him.

Can you see the difference? God does not hear us if we just make a great show and talk a lot. He looks into our hearts to see if we are "for real." I trust that you will always pray to God sincerely and humbly, asking His forgiveness and help in all you do each day.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why did the two men go into the temple?

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2. How would you describe this Pharisee's prayer?

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3. What do you think was the main difference between these two men?

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4. Which one received the blessing and why?

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5. How do you think you should pray?

.....

My Name is _____ Age _____

Looking for Jesus

Key Verse:
"The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."
Luke 19:10

Level 4 lesson 26

Extra: Why do you think the people muttered?

Read Luke 19:1-10 and Matthew 6:19-21

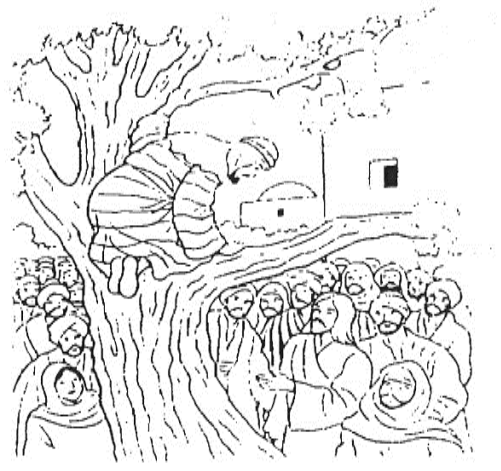
Zacchaeus was a very short little man who lived in Jericho. Like the man in our previous lesson, he was a tax-collector for the Romans. He had grown very rich, but he was not popular. His ill-gotten wealth sure hadn't made him happy! In fact, he was a very miserable man.

One day, sitting in his office where the taxes were brought to him, he heard the sound of a noisy crowd outside in the street. "What's going on?" he asked someone nearby. They explained that Jesus of Nazareth was passing through town. "Jesus of Nazareth!" thought Zacchaeus. "I've heard so much about Him. There must be something very special about a person as good and kind as He is. I must see Him!"

Quickly he ran towards the crowd coming down the street. He knew that unless he could get up somewhere high, he wouldn't be able to see Jesus at all; no-one would let him get through, that's for sure! As he desperately looked around for something to climb up on, he spotted a sycamore tree overhanging the street where Jesus would walk.

Quickly he scrambled up into the branches, sure that he would not be seen, but that he would get a real good look at Jesus. In fact, he got a much better look than he could have ever hoped for! Jesus stopped right under the tree and looked straight up at him! Zacchaeus' heart began to pound furiously. Nobody had ever looked at him like that before; it was as though He could see right into his heart!

Zacchaeus realised he could not hide anything from Jesus; he felt so ashamed of all the wrong things he had done. Quietly he waited for the words of condemnation he felt sure would come. The crowd laughed too, at his guilty, embarrassed face. Instead, Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I'm staying at your house!"



Zacchaeus could hardly believe his ears! Surely this holy man wouldn't stay with him – a rotten sinner?

The crowd thought it was a bit strange too, and some even muttered under their breath about it, "Fancy Jesus staying with a sinner like him; doesn't He know what Zacchaeus is like?" Oh yes, Jesus knew all about Zacchaeus! He knew he desperately wanted to have his sins forgiven; that he so much wanted to be right with God and have all his guilty fear taken away.

After they talked together and Zacchaeus started believing, he felt the love and forgiveness of Jesus in his heart. Then he knew he would never be the same again. He knew what he had to do to obey Jesus. "Lord," he said, "I will give half my money to the poor and those I have cheated I will pay back four times the amount!" Jesus smiled and said, "Today salvation is come to this house; for the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Jesus is still 'seeking the lost.' Perhaps He is even passing you by right now. I am sure Zacchaeus was always glad that he did not let the Saviour pass by that day. What about you, dear friend? Have you let the Saviour 'pass by' again and again?

Have you ever really looked for Him and asked Him to forgive your sins and live in your heart? Why not seek Him today? It is always the greatest joy when the seeking Saviour and a repenting sinner meet!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What kind of man was Zacchaeus?

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2. How did Zacchaeus show that he really wanted to see Jesus? (Fill in the consonants)

__ E __ __ I __ __ E __ UP I __ __ O A __ __ E E

3. Why do you think Jesus stopped and spoke to Zacchaeus?

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4. What did Zacchaeus say he would do to show that his life was changed?

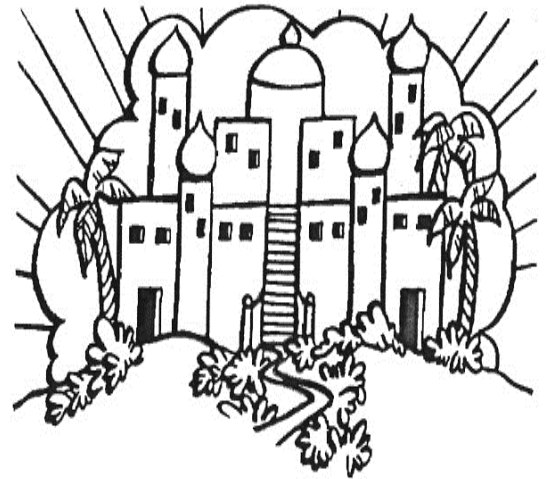
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5. Why do you think this story was included in the Bible?

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The Way to Heaven

Read John 14:1-6 and Ephesians 2:11-22



Key Verse:
“In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”
 John 14:2

Level 4 lesson 27

Extra: Find out more about Heaven by reading Revelation 21 and 22.

It is a fact that Scripture talks much more about Hell, than Heaven. However, today, we’re going to look at what Jesus told us of the Christian’s ultimate Heavenly home and what every Christian can look forward to in that wonderful place!

WHO WILL BE THERE?

Well firstly, and perhaps most significantly, Jesus will be there! He said He was preparing a place for us so that we can be with Him. Won’t it be lovely to see Him face to face? Of course, the Bible tells us there will be many angels there too; we read in the Bible of things that God sent His angels to do, and perhaps we will one day learn much more of the things they did for us. Of course, Heaven is the home of all God’s children; all those who have trusted in Christ and have been cleansed from sin, by accepting His sacrifice for sin on their behalf. However, always remember that **ONLY** true believers will be there, because we read that “nothing impure will ever enter it” (Revelation 21:27). No sin can ever enter Heaven. So how do we get there? People try all sorts of ways to get to Heaven, don’t they? Usually, they try to do something themselves. Let’s look briefly at some of them.

THE ‘DO GOOD THINGS’ WAY

It’s great to do good things, to help others and try your best in life, but the Bible says our best is not good enough for God! He demands perfection. Are you PERFECT? No, of course not! The Bible says nobody is perfect, so doing good isn’t the way.

THE ‘GO TO CHURCH’ WAY

Surely church must be the answer! Well, people ought to worship God; that is really important. But even going to Church every Sunday won’t make you a Christian! So this is not the answer.

THE ‘SAY YOUR PRAYERS’ WAY

This is another favourite idea. Sadly, as we saw in our first lesson about the Pharisee, sometimes God doesn’t hear prayer! Especially if we pray with pride and sin in our hearts! So prayer alone is not the answer! The answer is in John 14:6.

GOD’S WAY!

Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no-one comes to the Father, except through Me!” If we are ever to get to Heaven, we must put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ. We must believe in what HE has done for us on Calvary’s cross when He died for our sins. In our first study, God heard the tax-collector’s prayer. That man did not come and tell God all the good things he had done; he just came humbly and asked for forgiveness for all his sin. You can do that too. This is the kind of prayer that God will always hear!
 God’s Word says that everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as Saviour will become His child and one day go to Heaven. Once we have become a Christian in this way, THEN we want to obey God, do good things, go to Church, and pray in order to please Him.
 We do all those things BECAUSE we are going to Heaven, not as ways to try and get there! All other ways are like a ladder that’s too short or a bridge that’s not long enough. Trust in Jesus Christ today and be sure you are going to Heaven!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What is the name of the Christian’s true home?

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2. Who will be in Heaven?
 Who won’t be there?

.....

3. What did Jesus mean by saying “I am THE Way”?

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4. Name one of the many ways which people think will lead to Heaven.

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5. What is the only true way to get to Heaven?

A _____ J _____ C _____
 as S _____

A Blind Man Sees!

Read John 9:1-41

Key Verse:
“Jesus... said, ‘I am the LIGHT of the World. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”
 John 8:12

Level 4 lesson 28

Extra: What is spiritual darkness?
 How can we find the light?

As Jesus walked along one day with His disciples, they came upon a man sitting by the road-side begging. This poor man had been born blind and never seen the light of day; all his life he'd known only darkness. The disciples asked Jesus, "Did this man or his parents sin, to cause him to be born blind?" He answered, "Neither. This happened so that God could be seen at work in his life."

Jesus continued, "I am the Light of the World." Then, making some moist clay, He rubbed it on the blind man's eyes. "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam," He told him. Obediently, the man went, washed, and came back seeing! It was a miracle!

The man's neighbours were amazed to find that he could now see. They could hardly believe it was the same man. "Hey isn't that the man who used to sit and beg?" asked one. "Yes, it is!" said someone. Another one said, "Well it sure looks like him!" Finally, the man told them plainly, "Yes, it's ME!"

As you can imagine, they were all curious. "How did it happen?" they wanted to know. So he told them the whole story. "The man they call 'Jesus' made some mud and put it on my eyes and said, 'Go to the Pool of Siloam, and wash.' I went and washed, and suddenly I could see!"

Hearing this, they took him to the Pharisees, the religious leaders, as the Law required. But these men were so jealous of Jesus they ignored the great miracle He had performed. "What!" they said. "You say that this man cured your eyes on the Sabbath? "What a wicked thing to do!" Of course it was not wicked, but a great kindness. The man answered with the simple, yet most powerful witness: "One thing I do know; once I was blind but now I can see!" His greatest answer was, "If this man were not of God, He could do nothing."



That made the Pharisees so angry they threw him out of the Temple! The Lord Jesus heard that they had thrown him out and went looking for him. When He had found him, Jesus asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is He, Sir?" the man replied, "Tell me so that I may believe in Him." Jesus answered, "You have seen Him; in fact, He is the one speaking with you!"

The man replied, "Lord, I believe!" He then fell at Jesus' feet in humble worship. This man had not only received light in his eyes; now he had 'light' in his heart! He realised that Jesus truly was the "Light of the World." He truly was the 'Messiah,' the Son of God. How sad that the Pharisees (who were looking for the Messiah) and many of the people, who saw this great miracle, didn't believe in Jesus! Even his own parents didn't really stand by him or give thanks to God.

However, the man who had been blind praised God and continued to courageously speak about Jesus everywhere he went. What an example of faith this man is to us today. And how exciting it is to know that the One who looked for this man (who had been thrown out of the temple) can be OUR Saviour! Jesus is looking for you today, and He wants to save and encourage you, too!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. Why was the man born blind?
2. Describe what took place when he met Jesus.
3. (a) What did the neighbours ask? (b) What was the man's three word response to them?	(a) (b)
4. What great answer did he later give to the Pharisees?
5. (a) When Jesus found the man later, what question did He ask? (b) What final three word answer did the man give?	(a)? (b)