

JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT HELPING ALONG

Objective

The children learn that the Lord Jesus rewards those who are loyal and help along.

Contents

- The harvest is great, but there are few workers (Matthew 9:37–38).
- The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1–16).
- We help along in the Lord's work.



Lesson Plan

Lead-In

Workbook, Theme Picture,
Discussion

The children look at the theme picture and talk about it.

- The work appears to be strenuous.
- There is much fruit to be picked.
- There are only a few men and women to cope with all the work.

Implementation

Bible

Matthew 9:37–38:

“Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”

Question Prompt

How do we interpret this?

Teacher’s Presentation

The harvest of which the Lord Jesus speaks here refers to the souls who are to be gathered and prepared for God’s kingdom, the heavenly kingdom.

God would like all people to be helped. For this he needs many who will help along. However, compared to the population of the world, the number of God’s children is very small. That is why we should ask the Lord for additional workers. But it is also necessary that we too all work along ourselves. Often this requires much effort.

At one’s place of work, as a rule, one will be remunerated as was previously agreed upon. In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, the Lord Jesus relates how the dear God rewards those who help along.

Workbook, Text

The children read the text in the workbook.

[Note: In the text, the times of the day are indicated in the manner we are familiar with. The Bible text contains the Jewish version according to which the hours are counted starting at day break (i.e., 6 a.m.)]

Discussion

The children freely talk about the parable.

The following reactions are conceivable:

- That was unjust because when someone works longer, he or she must also receive more wages.
- The landowner was generous with the workers he hired last because he had the same wages paid to them as to the ones he hired first.
- The first workers were jealous of the last workers.
- etc.

Teacher's Presentation

From a human perspective, these reactions are understandable. With this parable, the Lord Jesus wanted to make God's righteousness and loving-kindness clear.

Discussion

First, elaborate on the fundamental characteristics of the parable with the children.

- The workers, who were the first to be employed, agreed upon a certain wage with the landowner.
- To the workers who were employed later, the landowner promised a fair wage without specifying an amount.
- In the evening, all received the same wage. This was fair for the first workers because they received what had been agreed upon. It was generous with respect to those who had begun their work later, because they received full wages, despite working less.
- The first ones were jealous, grumbled and complained to the landowner. A child reads aloud what he told one of them.

Bible

Matthew 20:14–15:

"Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

Question Prompt

What does this mean for us?

Discussion

- The Lord is the “householder”, and the work of salvation for mankind the “vineyard”.
- What matters is that we are prepared to help along in this work of salvation, regardless of the reward.

That is why we want to

- be thankful that we are part of this work of salvation;
- be happy we can help along to complete God’s work;
- help along out of love for the Lord and his work;
- never focus on what we have achieved and think we have earned something; and
- put our trust in the Lord’s loving-kindness.

Question Prompt

What reward has been promised to us?

Workbook, Exercise 1

The children individually work on the exercise. The answer is read aloud.

Discussion

Afterwards, determine the significance of Wisdom of Solomon 5:15 for us.

- We will live eternally.
- Although all people have an immortal soul, there will be those who have to endure eternal death.
- The Lord does not provide a reward as would be common in our everyday work. He himself is our reward (i.e., we are able to be with him for all eternity and see him in his glory).
- The Lord cares for us.

This he does today already and will also do in eternity.

Teacher’s Presentation

The reward given by the Lord is so great, it far exceeds mere pay for helping along. Receiving it, is grace.

Question Prompt

In view of this, how are envy and jealousy to be assessed?

Discussion

No one has reason to be envious or jealous. For all, the reward is immeasurably greater than what has been deserved.

Workbook, Exercise 2

Read the letter and discuss how the parable helps to answer Elena's questions. Emphasize the following:

Discussion

- It is important for a child of God to help along faithfully in God's work.
- How long we help along, is not decisive. Some just come in contact with the Lord's work earlier than others.
 - Many are sealed as children.
 - Others become acquainted with God's work as adults, and only then become children of God.

Teacher's Presentation

Helping along with the completion work includes

- helping to lead souls to the Lord,
- contributing to the joy in the fellowship of God's children, and
- acting according to God's will (i.e., to work upon oneself) in order to mature into Christ's nature.

Question Prompt

How are children able to help along in God's work?

Discussion

This is possible when they

- try to do God's will and avoid evil,
- invite others to the services or religious instruction classes
- pray for others and themselves, but also for the completion of God's work,
- enhance the hours in God's house (e.g., by playing the recorder),
- bring joy to other children of God (e.g., by being friendly, ready to help, etc.)

Conclusion**Discussion**

Together with the children, plan to visit someone who is ill, or help an elderly member of the congregation etc.

Notes
