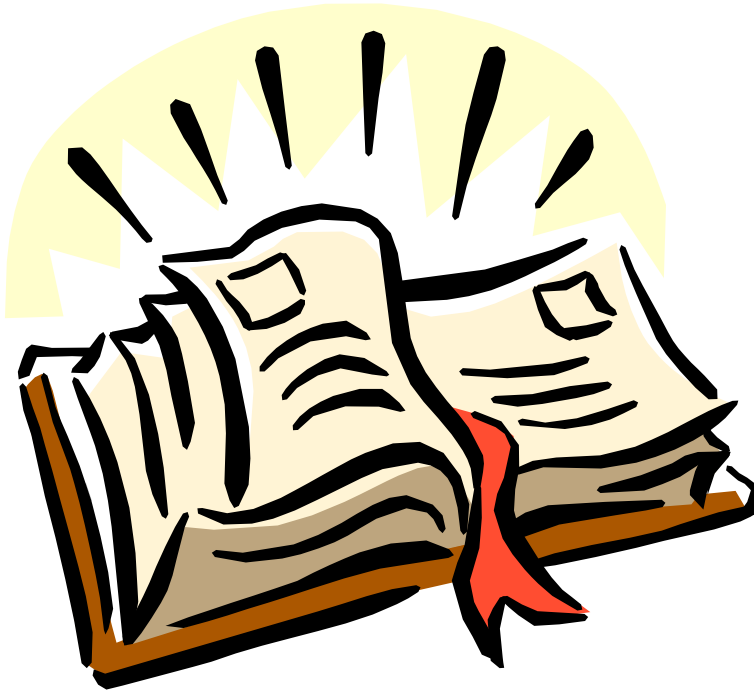


Bible Time for Kids!



CHILDREN'S DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF:

**LESSON TITLE: The Parable of the Evil
Vinedressers**

THEME: God rewards His faithful

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:33-46



Dear Parents...

Welcome to Bible Time for Kids. Bible Time for Kids is a series of daily devotions for children and their families. Our purpose is to supplement our Sunday morning curriculum and give you an opportunity to encourage your children to develop a daily devotional life. We hope you and your family will be blessed as you study God's Word together.

This week in Children's Church we learned **The Parable of the Evil Vinedressers**. The theme was "**God rewards His faithful servants.**" In our lesson we learned how important it is to turn from our sin and give Jesus the respect and honor due Him.

In our devotions this week we will continue to learn that though rebellious and stubborn people may appear to be enjoying their sin while alive on Earth, their selfish actions have eternal consequences. We will all stand before the Lord one day. Our hearts need to be prepared by placing our faith and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.

The section of scripture that we studied was **Matthew 21:33-46**. The following five devotions are based on either the scripture and/or the theme for Sunday's lesson. As a starting point it would be good for you to review these verses with your children.

These devotions are designed to help you reinforce Sunday's lesson throughout the week with your children, provide some more ideas for the application of God's Word in your children's lives and provide a tool to help in family devotions.

Obviously children at various age levels will respond to the devotional in different ways. You may want to add your own ideas to these to make them more age appropriate.

May the Lord bless you as you study His Word together!

Day One

Bearing Fruit or Bare Fruit?

Text: John 15:16 - "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."

Also read Colossians 1:10

Have you ever felt the disappointment of not being chosen for something you really wanted to be a part of? Maybe you weren't chosen for a play at school or you were overlooked for the basketball or baseball team? It doesn't feel very good does it? Maybe you weren't invited to a party that all of your friends were invited to. It can make you feel left out or forgotten, right? Well God gives everyone the opportunity to be a part of His kingdom and heavenly family. But unfortunately not everyone who is invited will come. Can you imagine why that would be?

When Jesus was teaching the parable of the evil vinedressers, as we read in Matthew 21:33-46, He desired that the religious leaders would turn from their rebellion against God and believe in Him as their Savior. Turning away from their sin and asking Jesus for forgiveness for their sins was the only way they were going to enter heaven. Their hearts, however, were hardened; they just wanted to get rid of Jesus so they could continue in their sin and not feel guilty. As sad as it is, some people won't come to Jesus when they are invited because they love doing bad things too much.

As our Bible verse reads in John 15:16 "...you did not choose Me but I chose you..." What an awesome honor it is to know that God's only son has chosen you and me to be a part of his family. All we need to do is respond to His choosing us by saying, "Yes, I accept you!" Have you accepted Jesus' invitation to come to live in your heart and life? It is the most important decision you could ever make. May we never be guilty of saying no to Jesus' kind and gentle invitation to come and have a relationship with Him. Then when we come to know Him our lives will begin to bear fruit. We will become kind and loving to others just like Jesus is towards us.

- Do you believe God has chosen you to go bear fruit?
- Think about how God used your mom or dad or a friend to tell you about Jesus. Will you do the same for someone else?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Fruit: Producing godly character (Galatians 5:23-24) and spreading the gospel through our faithfulness.

Day Two

Fearless and Faithful

Text: Matthew 25:23 - "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"

Also read Lamentations 3:22-23

In our lesson last Sunday we learned about the unfaithful vinedressers from Matthew 21:35-39. They beat and killed each of the servants that the landowner had sent to gather the fruit. The landowner didn't give these wicked vinedressers one chance, but three chances to show faithfulness. The last time he even sent his son. The landowner represents God in this story and the vinedressers are rebellious sinners. The servants represent those who faithfully serve God.

What does this story tell us about God's servants? They were first willing to go and gather the fruit. Then the second group of servants were still willing to obey the landowner even though they might die and thirdly his son was also willing to lay down his life for his father. It is sad, but Jesus is showing the religious leaders their own hearts. They are the rebellious sinners, or vinedressers. God had sent the prophets and others to His people to get them to turn from their ways, but they didn't want anything to do with them, even killing them. Eventually they would crucify God's son, Jesus.

But what does this tell us about God? We learn that He is a patient Father. He gave those evil vinedressers three chances to turn from their bad ways. Why was the landowner patient? Because the Landowner (God our Father) loves sinners in this world and He wants them to be a part of His family. Why do you think the servants were willing to lay down their lives for the landowner? They loved him. They loved Him only because He first loved them (1 John 4:19). Do you really believe the price that Jesus paid by dying on the cross? Are you able to see how merciful God is to us as sinners? God is full of mercy towards us!

- Share how God has shown mercy towards you (parents, share with your children).
- Talk about how the servants must have felt going to gather the fruit.
- Think of some ways that you can show faithfulness in your life.

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Faithful: To follow and obey God at any cost.

What's The Rush?

Text: 2 Peter 3:10 - "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works in it will be burned up."

Also read Matthew 21:40

Have you ever done something wrong and knew you would be disciplined later? I've said something hurtful to someone before and had to go and ask for forgiveness and because of my pride I was humbled. I also remember as a child doing something wrong and remember it really hurt my mom when she had to discipline me. But think about the evil vinedressers in our story. Do you think they were concerned about the landowner coming? After all, they had killed and beat every person he had sent. They were not showing the least bit of concern over what the landowner was going to do. That is what it's like for unsaved sinners. They do not fear God and their sinful behavior shows it. A lot of people don't want to be bothered with thinking about God and that one day He is going to judge this world. They are living only to do what they want to and have hardened their heart to the ways of God.

Yet the Bible tells us in 2 Peter, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." A thief in the night! You mean when we least expect Him? Yes! What will that mean for the people who always reject the invitation of receiving Jesus Christ? It means that they will be caught by surprise and sadly spend eternity separated from God. The Bible tells us, "For many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:14.

Those evil vinedressers were not expecting the landowner to do anything, but God is in complete control and is not mocked. (Galatians 6:7) Even though it seems like someone may be getting away with sin, the day will come without warning when they will have to stand before the Lord and be judged for their actions. Are we faithful followers of Jesus Christ or rebellious and hard-hearted sinners? What do you think the owner of the vineyard would do after all he had done for the vinedressers? He did everything he could to warn them. What is God going to do when He sends Jesus back to get His church? It is important that we turn to Jesus before it is too late!

- Have you ever thought you got away with something, but found out you really didn't?
- Have you ever told someone about Jesus before? Tell about it.

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Mocked: to treat others with ridicule.

Pleased In Persecution!

Text: Matthew 10:39 - "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

Also read Psalm 1:6

Let's think about those servants from Sunday's lesson in Matthew 21 that went to the vinedressers to gather the fruit. How do you think they felt about the landowner? Do you think they felt angry for having to go talk to the bad guys? Maybe they were afraid of losing their lives. Or maybe they were happy that they could be obedient? Do you think they were joyful in knowing they might get hurt or die? Does that sound crazy or what? If we are following God and trusting Him fully, we do not have to be afraid. He will always lead us to the right places when we are following Him, even if we don't know where that is. God has the best in store for us if we will only follow Him, and He promises that everything will work out for good if we love Him (Romans 8:28). As believers in Jesus, we can look forward to our heavenly home with God our Father and Jesus. This is what it means to trust and step out in faith. We're unsure of where we may be led but we're trusting that we will spend eternity in heaven. I imagine the servants were eager to please their master, the landowner, therefore they were faithful to obey his commands.

When we stop living for ourselves and begin living for Jesus, our lives are really His. How wonderful it is to know we can trust in a powerful and wise God who has numbered all the hairs on our head, therefore do not fear - Matthew 10:31.

Does following Jesus mean we will have to die? Yes! We will have to die to everything that is not from God. Things like hate, greed, envy, bitterness; anything that separates us from God has to die. And then when we are following God He may ask us to witness to people in areas that are dangerous, like other countries or to people who might make fun of us. But we can be assured that God has gone before us to help us. Can you understand now how so many Christians have been willing to die for Jesus? This is what it means to be persecuted. Were the servants persecuted in the Bible lesson from Matthew 21?

- Talk about someone in the Bible who was persecuted for following Jesus.
- What other ways are we persecuted for our faith in Christ?
- Have you ever been laughed at because you made a stand for Jesus?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Persecution: to suffer harm because of belief.

Day Five

Philippians 1:21

Text: Matthew 21:43 - "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."

Also read Romans 9:24

What have we learned about faithfulness to God this week? Just to name a few things:

1. It pleases God.
2. We don't have to fear at all when we follow God.
3. Though we are sometimes not very faithful, God will always be faithful.
4. God rewards us for our faithfulness and our lives bear fruit.

The life of a Christian is wonderful, joyful and rewarding even though we can sometimes live through tough things. The more we give our life to Jesus, the more people will see Jesus in our actions. The awesome plan that God has for each of us can only be worked out when we let Him work in our life. That means we have to be willing to live for Him and let Him use our lives to reach other children who don't know about Jesus. Even though the servants died and it was a cruel thing the vinedressers did to them and the son, the saddest part was the terrible final judgement of those wicked men.

That is what we need to remember about those who refuse to believe in Jesus. God continues to show compassion and love and wants them to be saved, but we do not know when time will run out for them. Are we right with God? Are we being faithful to God? Or are we living life the way we want to, never giving a thought to God's commands and His desire to have us follow Him? Jesus was telling this story to the men He desired to see saved, but they still rejected Him as their Messiah.

This coming week think about these verses that you looked at this week and ask God to show you which person from the story that you may be. Are you the servant or the vinedresser. Ask Him to show to you His love through Jesus in a greater way.

- Tell about a time when you trusted in God and He worked everything out.

Kid's Prayer Time



This week ask God to show you what it means to be a faithful servant. Also ask Him for His help in areas of your life that maybe you haven't been very faithful. Ask Him to help you to bear fruit. Remember to thank Him for His patience, mercy and faithfulness towards you.

Memory Verse...

First Grade and Above

**"God rewards His
faithful servants."**

Third Grade and Above

**"Therefore I say to you,
the kingdom of God will
be taken from you and
given to a nation bearing
the fruits of it."**

Matthew 21:43