
Lesson Overview

Biblical Passage	Matthew 17:22-23; 20:17-19
Supporting Passage	Luke 9:44-45
Memory Verse	1 John 2:2
Biblical Truth	Jesus came to earth to secure our salvation through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.
Context	<p>On several occasions Jesus explained His purpose to His disciples and even predicted His death three different times to His disciples. The first prediction is recorded in three gospels: Matthew 16:21-23, Mark 8:31-33, and Luke 9:21-22. In this lesson, the second and third of these predictions are examined. The second prediction came just after Jesus' transfiguration. Luke noted that the disciples did not understand what Jesus told them.</p>
Learning Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will examine the disciples' reaction to Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection.• Students will consider ways to verbalize their response to Christ's death.
Prayer Suggestions	<p>As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for those in your group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray that students will examine the disciples' reactions to Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection.• Pray that students will consider ways to verbalize their response to Christ's death.• Pray that your students will accept the gift of salvation made available to them through Jesus' death on the cross.

Biblical Commentary

Investigation

The first time that Jesus predicted His death, there was a poignant exchange between Jesus and Peter. Peter rebuked the Lord for speaking of such a violent death. Jesus responded by saying, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (Mt. 16:23).

Following His transfiguration, Jesus retreated with His disciples and warned them of His impending death. As Jesus prepared for His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, He once again warned His disciples that He would soon die a horrible death. Luke wrote that they did not understand what Jesus was telling them.

By the time that the incidents in this lesson occurred, Jesus’ ministry in Galilee was complete. He and His disciples were moving toward Jerusalem. With this journey as the backdrop of their daily lives, Jesus explicitly revealed what the outcome of their travel would be.

Importance

This passage teaches that **The Future is in God's Hands**. Jesus knew what His future held, so He tried to prepare His disciples for His death and resurrection. Even though His life would end in violent death, He trusted His Father’s will, demonstrating that trust by following His Father’s plan. Believers can take comfort in the fact that Jesus knows the future and can prepare them to face anything. Even when believers face difficult days, they can trust God’s ultimate plan for their lives.

Interpretation

Matthew 17:22 Jesus and the disciples were in **Galilee** near **Capernaum**. While they were there, Jesus brought the Twelve together and spent some time alone with them. Jesus didn’t want anyone to know that He and the disciples were in the area (Mk. 9:30). Unlike the times in public when Jesus taught the crowd, this was a time of private teaching intended for just the **disciples**.

Jesus stated that He was the **Son of Man** who would be given over to other men to be killed. In saying this, He communicated to the disciples the idea of setting Himself apart for a special work. It is ironic and tragic that those whom Jesus came to give life would be the ones to kill Him. Instead of gratitude for what He was offered, the Son of Man received only suffering and death. The Greek word translated as “delivered” literally means “to give over.” Matthew used the term for the first time to describe what would happen to Jesus. After the word “delivered” was used in this verse, Matthew used it nine times in chapters 26 and 27 to stress the fulfillment of

Jesus' predictions. The emphasis was not just that Jesus would suffer and die (as He had already told the disciples), but that someone would become a traitor and turn against Him in order to bring about His death. From our perspective, we can easily see this as a reference to **Judas'** betrayal of Jesus.

Matthew 17:23 Jesus said that He would be killed and then be raised. God the Father would carry out Jesus' resurrection—the act of being raised from the dead. This reinforced the reality that Jesus was completely dead, not sleeping or merely calling a physical timeout.

"Filled with grief" is intense and extremely important to understanding this encounter. The disciples' reaction showed that they at least partially understood the first part of Jesus' prediction. But they failed to comprehend the last part. While Jesus' death was disturbing to them, His resurrection was beyond their grasp. This was contrary to everything they had associated with the coming Messiah who would establish a new Kingdom.

The timing of Jesus' predictions of His death was striking. His second prediction occurred after He had healed a boy who was demon-possessed (Mk. 9:14-32). Just after the boy was lifted up off the ground and healed, Jesus referred to His own death and uplifting. The miracle served as a backdrop for Jesus to teach the disciples that He, too, would be cast down and ultimately killed but raised again, just as the boy was raised from the ground.

After that prediction, the disciples began discussing who would be greatest in the Kingdom of God (Mt. 18:1-5). Imagine the contrast: On one hand the Savior told how His death would soon come to pass. On the other, His disciples were consumed with selfish ambition.

Matthew 20:17-19 These verses recorded Jesus' third prediction of His own death. Matthew 20:17-19, Mark 10:32-34, and Luke 18:31-34 are almost identical. Matthew and Mark give the location of this prediction: Jesus and the disciples were traveling to **Jerusalem**, probably on their way to the Passover festival. Their destination served as an interesting backdrop to this prediction. Jesus later noted that Jerusalem was well known for killing God's prophets (Mt. 23:34-39).

The disciples' response to Jesus' prediction was similar to their previous response. Jesus gave an incredibly detailed description of His own death in order to teach His disciples. John Phillips, commenting on Jesus' prediction, noted, "In His statement **Jesus** piled up detail after detail in an awesome display of divine foreknowledge. According to the law of compound probabilities, the chances against a prediction coming true increase enormously with each specific detail added to it. And, of course, the more unlikely the detail, the more unlikely the fulfillment" (Phillips, p. 392).

Jesus mentioned three events that would precede His death. First, He would be betrayed into the hands of the religious leaders of the Jewish nation. These were the men who had been looking for a way to kill Jesus since He had healed Lazarus some time earlier (see Jn. 11:38-57 for details). Second, with trumped-up charges and an accelerated trial, these men would sentence Jesus to death. By these actions they would be standing on solid legal ground (at least in their own eyes) in bringing about His death. Finally, the ruling Roman government, the "**Gentiles**," would carry out His death. It would involve public humiliation, brutal beating, and **crucifixion**.

Implications

Jesus wanted His disciples to know what was coming so they would be prepared for their faith journey. He did not withhold His upcoming death and resurrection from them. He spoke plainly about it even though it caused

them pain. He has not withheld information from us either. Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). While persecution is painful, God has prepared an eternal home for us with Him. How have you endured painful circumstances for Christ’s sake? How can you encourage your students to stand strong in Christ when they are persecuted?

Miracles, like the one in which Jesus healed the boy who was demon-possessed, aren’t a common occurrence. However, Jesus used this incident as a chance to point to the greatest miracle that will ever occur, His own death and resurrection. If people need a miracle to believe, they already have one in Jesus. How has Christ’s resurrection been a source of hope in your life? How can you share this with your students?

Both Jesus and the disciples were consumed with something. Jesus knew His purpose, and as painful as it would be He did nothing to sway from it. The disciples, however, were consumed with themselves. Their selfishness contrasts with Jesus’ unselfishness. It’s easy to be consumed with self. But God has a purpose for each of us that is opposite of what the flesh desires. In what ways has God’s holiness and His call to bear fruit changed what consumes you? How can you encourage your students to adopt a Christ-centered purpose?

Teaching Plan

Connect

Review Questions

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will answer five review questions from the previous lesson.

Print one copy of the "Review Questions" activity sheet for your use.

After greeting students, use the review questions to test what they can recall from the previous lesson as well as to provide the context for today's lesson.

Master Teacher Option: What is it?

(10 minutes, moderate set-up)

Students will try to guess the purpose of several unusual objects.

Provide three to five unusual objects, anything from an obscure kitchen utensil to a strange tool from the garage. Keep items hidden from view. (Alternately, prepare a slide show with slides of several unusual objects.) Supply paper and pens.

Divide students into teams of two to three people. Distribute paper and a pen to each group. Share that students will attempt to describe the purpose for each object you will display. Hold up each object, one at a time, allowing teams 20 seconds to record what they believe is the object's purpose. (If you've prepared the slideshow, present one slide at a time, pausing 20 seconds for teams to record their description of the item's purpose.) When you are finished, call for team members pass their papers to you. For every object read each team's answers. (If there are too many teams, read only the amusing and the correct answers.) Invite those who got all answers correct to stand up and acknowledge them as winners. (If no group got all answers correct, acknowledge those who got the most correct answers.)

Say: In this activity, we tried to determine the purpose of certain objects. In today's lesson, we will look at Jesus' purpose for coming to earth.

Explore

Master Teacher Key Study: He Predicted His Death

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will study Matthew 17:22-23 and 20:17-19 to examine the disciples' reaction to Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection.

Print one copy of the Master Teacher Key Study for your use. Provide a copy of the Student Worksheet and a pen for each student.

Learning Goal: Students will examine the disciples' reaction to Jesus' prediction of His death and resurrection.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then, use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Matthew 17:22-34 and 20:17-19.

Transform

Deeper Discussion

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will discuss Jesus' purpose for coming to earth and their responses to Christ's death.

Learning Goal: Students will verbalize their response to Christ's death.

Call on a student to read Matthew 17:22-23 and 20:17-19. Then, lead students to discuss the following:

- **Why do you think the disciples focused on Jesus' death rather than His resurrection?**
- **How do you feel when you think about what Jesus had to suffer to pay the penalty for your sins?**
- **When you share your faith with others, do you point out the miraculous nature of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?**
- **How does the assurance that God is in control of all things give you confidence to face whatever the future holds?**

Divide students into twos or threes and encourage them to discuss why it might have been difficult for the disciples to hear and accept everything Jesus told them would happen. Then, encourage students to share what makes it difficult for them to hear and accept Jesus' teachings in their lives. Lead students in prayer, asking God to help students accept the knowledge of what Jesus willingly did for them. After prayer, encourage students with questions to talk about them with you or another trusted believer.

Master Teacher Option: Grieving over Jesus

(10 minutes, easy set-up)

Students will share how they have experienced grief over the death of Jesus.

Learning Goal: Students will verbalize their response to Christ's death.

Point out that the disciples responded to Jesus' prediction of death with grief. Instruct students to work with a partner, and lead them to discuss:

- **What does the disciples' grief tell you?** (*They didn't understand what Jesus had to do; they heard only about His death, and missed the promise of His resurrection.*)
- **Why do people grieve?** (*They are sad; they realize they will lose something or someone.*)

After a few moments, bring students together and answer the questions above. Share that King David wrote many of the Psalms to express his grief over his own behavior and shortcomings . . . about his own sin. Say: **When you accept that there is sin in your life, then it's hard not to grieve over the fact that Jesus had to die in your place *because of your sin.***

After discussion, lead students in a time of reflective prayer using the following prompts:

- **Tell God about the sin in your life that grieves you. Give the sin, the shortcomings, the struggles over to Jesus now.**
- **Share with God the grief you face when you think about Jesus having to die on the cross for you.**
- **Ask God to make you worthy of the sacrifice Jesus made for you.**

Conclude by praying that God will help students use the knowledge of what Jesus willingly did for them to share His love with others.

Take Home Activity

Family Devotion

(10-15 minutes at home, easy set-up)

Distribute copies of the Family Devotion to students and encourage them to share the devotion with their family.

A copy of the Family Devotion will be included in your lesson PDF download.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

(5-8 minutes, easy set-up)

Use these questions to review the content from Lesson 20: "His Transfiguration"
The correct answer for each question is printed in bold, italic font.

1. Which three disciples did Jesus take with Him to witness His transfiguration?
 - a. Matthew, Mark, and John
 - b. James, Mark, and Andrew
 - c. ***Peter, James, and John***
 - d. Ed, Johnny, and Lewis

2. Who were the two people the disciples saw with Jesus on the mountain?
 - a. ***Moses and Elijah***
 - b. Gideon and Joshua
 - c. Isaiah and Jeremiah
 - d. Caesar and Jeremiah

3. What was significant about the role of Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration?
 - a. Moses and Elijah represented the Old Testament,
 - b. Moses and Elijah both had beards.
 - c. Moses and Elijah prophesied about Jesus' coming.
 - d. ***Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the prophets.***

4. What did Peter want to do after witnessing Jesus' transfiguration?
 - a. Fall down and worship Jesus
 - b. Go and tell the other disciples what they had seen
 - c. ***Build shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah***
 - d. Run away in fear

5. What were God's instructions to Peter, James, and John after they saw Jesus transfigured?
 - a. To leave the mountain
 - b. ***To listen to Jesus***
 - c. To be still and know that He was God
 - d. To go and tell everyone what they had seen

LESSON 21

HE PREDICTED HIS DEATH

Biblical Passage: Matthew 17:22-23; 20:17-19

Memory Verse: 1 John 2:2

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1. Jesus' mission included both _____ on the cross and the _____ (Matthew 17:22-23).
2. Jesus understood what His mission would _____ of Him (Matthew 20:17-19).

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think the disciples focused on Jesus' death rather than His resurrection?
- How do you feel when you think about what Jesus had to suffer to pay the penalty for your sins?
- When you share your faith with others, do you point out the miraculous nature of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?
- How does the assurance that God is in control of all things give you confidence to face whatever the future holds?

DETAILS

MATTHEW 17:22-23	MATTHEW 20:17-19
He would be betrayed	
He would be killed	
He would be raised to life	

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT . . .

“God says don't worry about your future. He is the author of your story and He's already written the final chapter.”

—*Max Lucado*

HE PREDICTED HIS DEATH

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Introduction: Jesus tried to explain to His disciples what was coming, but they seemed to be in denial. Several times He described His coming death—noting that He would rise on the third day—but they didn't seem to hear Him. Jesus' earthly ministry was coming to an end. They traveled to Jerusalem, where He was destined to make the greatest sacrifice in the history of the world, thereby completing the greatest plan, resulting in the greatest miracle, and fulfilling the greatest purpose—but His disciples still didn't understand.

1. Jesus' mission included both death on the cross and the resurrection (Matthew 17:22–23).

Biblical Background: Jesus demonstrated His confidence that **The Future is in God's Hands** and prepared His disciples for future events by assuring them that God was in control of these events (v. 22). Jesus revealed His knowledge that God's plan for His life included betrayal, death, and being raised to life (v. 23a). Even though Jesus had already warned His disciples about what would happen to Him, they responded with grief to the announcement of His death and missed the promise of His resurrection (v. 23b).

Illustration: Between each play of a football game, the team with the ball huddles to plan their next move. The team numbers and memorizes plays so that all the quarterback has to do in the huddle is name the play and each player knows what to do.

Application: Just as well prepared teams have a plan, God had a plan for Jesus' life and ministry. God was calling the play. Jesus was running it and trying to help the disciples understand what was going on and what they were to do.

2. Jesus understood what His mission would require of Him (Matthew 20:17-19).

Biblical Background: During the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus intentionally drew His disciples aside to give them more details about what would soon happen (v. 17). Jesus revealed details about His betrayer, how He would be treated, and how He would die (vv. 18–19a). Jesus' revelation showed the depth of His understanding of what He faced in Jerusalem (v. 19b).

Illustration: Have you ever tried to complete a project or assignment without reading the directions? Often when that is attempted, the project is done incorrectly or incompletely. It's easier and more productive to understand what and why you are doing something before you do it. Jesus understood His purpose and mission in life.

Application: God's plan for Jesus was to be the Savior for a sinful world. Jesus not only understood His role, but He accepted the sacrifices required of Him.

Conclusion: Jesus demonstrated both His divine foreknowledge and His complete conviction that God controlled all circumstances of His life. Yet, while Jesus understood His mission, His followers struggled to accept all that Jesus would face. In fact, they became so focused on the pain He would suffer that they missed the true significance of the resurrection as the final act of His salvation for us. As His disciples, we too are challenged to accept that His suffering and His resurrection were done for us!

LESSON 21

HE PREDICTED HIS DEATH

CHRISTOS
STUDENT EDITION

Biblical Passage: Matthew 17:22-23; 20:17-19

Think about a time when you've heard someone say these words: "Well, I have good news and bad news. Which do you want to hear first?" Did your heart start racing when someone started a conversation with those words?? Were your hands shaky or sweaty? Or did you simply think the person was just being dramatic to get your attention? If you were indeed going to receive both good news and bad news, which would you prefer to hear first? How difficult is it to focus on the good news, especially if you've already heard the bad news?

Read Matthew 16:21-23 and 17:22-23 and 20:17-19. Matthew recorded three different occasions when Jesus gave His disciples both the good news and the bad news. In chapter 16, immediately after Peter first confessed his belief that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus described how He would suffer in Jerusalem. In chapter 17, shortly after Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain, He once again told the disciples what He would suffer in Jerusalem. In both instances, despite seeing Christ's true identity, the disciples were distressed by what would happen to Him. In chapter 20, as Jesus led His disciples into Jerusalem for the last time, He reminded them that He would be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, who would condemn Him to death, and hand Him over to the Gentiles to crucify Him. This time, however, Jesus boldly promised that He would be raised from the dead on the third day. Yet once again, the disciples couldn't hear the good news of His resurrection because they were so focused on the bad news of His death.

Jesus knew that His mission as Messiah would lead Him to the cross, and He also knew that He would be resurrected from the dead. His full awareness of God's plan along with His complete trust in His Father allowed Him to endure the bad news for the joy that would be found when the good news came true. Through His death, Jesus paid the penalty for humanity's sins. Through His resurrection, He conquered death and can therefore grant eternal life to those who place their faith in Him.

CONNECTION QUESTIONS:

- How were Jesus' predictions of His death and resurrection both bad news and good news?
- Why do you think the disciples heard Jesus would suffer, but couldn't hear that He would be raised to life?
- How does Jesus' completed work as our Messiah give us joy and hope?
- How can we share the story of Jesus so that others can know Him as their Messiah?