

May 10, 2020

Youth Topic: **Do Good** | Unit III. Called to God's Work of Justice

General Lesson:
**Peace and
Justice Reign**

Lesson
11

Background Scripture: Zechariah 8
Print Passage: Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17



"These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts." (Zechariah 8:16)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, index cards, (**optional:** Youth Leadership Resource Kit [materials for this lesson])
- Prior to class, find a video clip that demonstrates peaceful protest. Use the video clip during the "It's Go Time!" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Sometimes, people respond to evil conditions in the world with a sense of hopelessness, regret, and doom. Where can they find motivation for remaining hopeful? The prophet Zechariah delivers God's promise of a new world of peace and prosperity for God's people.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Do you think protesting about a particular situation is a good thing, or does it usually make the situation worse? Explain."

It's Go Time! (Illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Show the students the video clip that demonstrates peaceful protest. Tell the students that sometimes God's people must speak out against injustice with the hope and assurance that things can get better. Without hope, many people give up and accept mistreatment and injustice. Allow time for the students to share their thoughts and feelings about the video clip.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have the students read this week's contemporary story and connect it this week's lesson.

After the story is read and discussed, invite the students to share their personal or indirect experiences with injustices that occur at their school or within the community. Allow them time to share their thoughts and ideas. Remind the students that God always has a plan to restore His people, even when it seems they have no interest in doing right. Remind the students that God is still in control.

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Inspect the passage for the day. You will want to make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the passage for those who do not have a Bible with them.

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's text that should be used throughout teaching this lesson—in order to set the stage for the passage.

Zechariah encouraged the people to turn away from sin and focus on rebuilding the Temple. The visions God gave Zechariah described how Israel's enemies would be destroyed and blessings to Jerusalem would be restored. Zechariah's message was given to a small group of faithful believers who were referred to as the "remnant" because they were among those who had returned to Jerusalem from captivity. Zechariah proclaimed that when God returned prosperity to the land, Jerusalem would be known as the Faithful City. During troubled times, the old people and children were usually the ones who suffered most. Zechariah described a scene where the old people and children would once again be visible in the streets, visiting with each other and playing. This was a sign of restored prosperity. Zechariah emphasized that the covenant relationship between God and the people would be renewed and the entire community would be filled with God's presence.

Through the years, God used different prophets to motivate the people to continue building the Temple. The people lost their focus due to distractions, lost hope, and lost connection with God. Zechariah told the people that God was going to bless them physically and spiritually, giving them peace in the land and a plentiful harvest of fruit and crops (verse 12). Zechariah urged the people to stay focused and continue building the Temple, knowing that God would be with them and His favor would be upon them to complete the task (verse 13). God would prove faithful to do His part to reestablish Jerusalem, but Jerusalem had an important role to play in the restoration. God instructed the people to tell the truth, exercise fair judgment among the people, and live peacefully with each other.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Zechariah 8:1-8, 11-17)

1 The word of the LORD Almighty came to me. **2** This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I am very jealous for

Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her." **3** This is what the LORD says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the LORD Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain." **4** This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. **5** The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there." **6** This is what the LORD Almighty says: "It may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?" declares the LORD Almighty. **7** This is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. **8** I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God."

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11 "But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past," declares the LORD Almighty.

12 "The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people. **13** Just as you, Judah and Israel, have been a curse among the nations, so I will save you, and you will be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong." **14** This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you and showed no pity when your ancestors angered me," says the LORD Almighty, **15** "so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. **16** These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; **17** do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the LORD.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Examine the intersections of the passage. What is the passage about? How was it heard at the time? How does it apply now?

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Zechariah encouraged the people to turn away from sin and focus on rebuilding the Temple. The visions God gave Zechariah described how Israel's enemies would be destroyed and blessings to

Jerusalem would be restored. Zechariah proclaimed that when God returned prosperity to the land, Jerusalem would be known as the Faithful City.” Emphasize the point that God was going to do His part to reestablish Jerusalem, but Jerusalem had an important role to play in the restoration. God instructed the people to tell the truth, exercise fair judgment among the people, and live peacefully with each other. Tell the students that God is willing to help those who help themselves. A believer’s relationship with God should not be one-sided. God loves His people; likewise, believers should be faithful to demonstrate their love for God.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Work on the passage from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the students read and answer their own questions about the text, discuss how Zechariah encouraged the people to believe God would fully restore them spiritually and materially, making their prosperity visible throughout the land. Ask the students to answer this important question: “How do you respond to tasks that are difficult or seemingly impossible?” Allow the students to discuss this question. Highlight the importance of seeking God for help. Encourage the students to answer all questions posed in this section of the student book.

There’s an App for That! (application.)

Show how this Scripture applies to present day.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say this: “In today’s ‘Wake Up!’ story, Sarita and Kareem participated in a rally to protest injustices in their community.” Emphasize the point that God is not pleased with human injustice and hatred. Encourage the students to practice God’s remedy for peace, which is telling the truth, exercising justice, treating everyone fairly, and seeking ways to live peacefully with one another.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Help the students think about how this Scripture connects to them personally.

At this point, discuss how today’s lesson reminds us that God is powerful and able to do anything. Allow time for the students to discuss how they handle life’s problems. Encourage them to turn their focus to God instead of wasting time trying to fix difficult problems without God. Remind them that God, in His perfect wisdom and knowledge, is able to help us confront and conquer any challenge before us.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

Give the students this challenge for the week. Emphasize that they can do it!

Challenge the students to read the entire background Scripture for today’s lesson—Zechariah 8. Have them pay special attention to the details of God’s promise to return prosperity to Jerusalem. Encourage the students to use the Scriptures as a source of encouragement to know that our world can be delivered from sin and restored in the same way.

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

Invite the students to play the game “I’m Having a Rally.” Instructions for the game are in the student book. Allow the students time to share their responses.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song that relates to this lesson.

Encourage the students to complete the “Media Mission.” Ask them, “Do you know what your rights are as an American citizen when it comes to protesting peacefully?” Direct the students to the Web site <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/peaceful-assembly/us.php> to gain knowledge regarding constitutional laws that protect citizens’ rights to protest. Encourage the class to learn more about why many people choose to express their concerns and interests through methods of protesting.