

Lesson 11

The Atonement of Jesus Christ

Once upon a time, long ago, there were stories about a very special person named Jesus. Jesus was God's Son, and He came to Earth to help us because we needed His help very much.

In the beginning, everything was perfect and beautiful, but then something sad happened. A long time ago, a man and a woman made a mistake and did something wrong. This made God sad because He loves us very much. It made us separate from God, and that's not good because God wants us to be with Him forever.

But God had a plan to help us. He knew we needed someone special to save us. So, He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth. Jesus came to help us because He loves us too!

Jesus did many amazing things when He was on Earth. He helped sick people feel better, He made blind people see, and He even made food for a lot of people from just a little bit of food! But the most important thing He did was to save us from “our” mistakes.

Jesus knew that to save us, He had to do something really hard. He had to suffer and die for us. But He was willing to do it because He loves us so much.

One day, Jesus went to a garden to pray. He felt very sad and scared because He knew He would have to suffer a lot to save us. But He did it anyway because He loves us more than anything.

People who didn't like Jesus hurt Him very badly. They put nails in His hands and feet and put Him on a cross to die. Jesus suffered a lot, but He never stopped loving us. He even forgave the people who hurt Him.

After Jesus died, something amazing happened! Three days later, He came back to life! This showed us that because of Jesus, we can live again too, even after we die.

Jesus did all of this because He loves us so much. He wants us to be happy and live with God forever. All we have to do is believe in Him, follow His teachings, and try to be like Him. That's why we call it the Atonement—it's when Jesus made everything right again so we can be with God. And that's the most wonderful gift of love there ever was.

So, let's remember to be grateful for Jesus and His Atonement. He did something amazing to save us because He loves us more than anything in the world. And because of Him, we can be forgiven and live happily with God forever and ever. Amen.

Additional Scriptures

- Romans 5:12–17 (by one came death, by one came life)
- 1 Peter 1:18–20 (Jesus was foreordained)
- Matthew 16:21 (Jesus's sacrifice was necessary)
- Luke 22:39–46 (Jesus's suffering in the garden)
- 1 John 1:7 (Jesus cleanses from sin)
- Isaiah 1:18 (sins shall be made white)
- 1 Corinthians 15:40–44 (description of the Resurrection)

HE TOOK MY WHIPPING FOR ME

In the mountains of Virginia years ago there was a boy's school class which no teacher could handle. The boys were so rough that the teachers resigned.

A young gray-haired teacher applied for the job. The old school director scanned him up and down, then said, "Young fellow, do you know what you are asking for? An awful beating, that's what. Every teacher we've had up there gives up in defeat. The young teacher replied, "I'll risk it. Let me try."

Well, when he appeared for duty in the little school, one big fellow, Tom whispered out loud, "I won't need any help; I can lick him myself."

The teacher said, "Good morning. We have come to conduct school."

The students yelled a sarcastic "Good Morning" back at the teacher at the top of their lungs.

"Now, I want a good school," the teacher continued, "but I confess, I don't know how unless you help me." Suppose we have a few rules. You tell me and I'll write them on the blackboard."

One fellow yelled, "No stealing!" Another chipped in, "On time!" Finally ten rules appeared. "Now, said the teacher, "a law is not good unless there is a penalty attached. What shall we do with the one who breaks them?"

"Beat them across the back ten times without his coat on!" came the shout.

"That is a pretty severe punishment boys, are you ready to stand by it?"

A yell in the affirmative greeted the teacher. "All right", said the teacher, "then school comes to order."

In a day or so "Big Tom" found his dinner was stolen. Upon inquiry the thief was located - a little hungry fellow about ten. The next morning the teacher announced, "We have found the thief and he must be punished according to your rule - ten stripes across the back! Jim, come up here!"

The trembling little fellow came up slowly with a big coat, buttoned and pinned up around his neck. He pleaded, "Teacher, you can lick me as hard as you like but please don't make me take off my coat."

"You helped make the rule," reasoned the teacher, "take the coat off."

"Oh teacher, don't make me!" he begged, but the teacher's stern face showed no leniency, so he began to unbutton. And what did the teacher behold? The lad had no shirt on and only strings for suspenders over his bony little body.

"How can I whip this boy?" thought the teacher. "But I must do something if I am going to keep this classes respect."

Everyone was quiet as death. "How come you came to school without a shirt, Jim?" asked the teacher.

"My father died, and we ain't got much. I only have one shirt, and mother's washing it today, so I wore my brother's coat to keep warm."

With a sigh of a heavy heart, the teacher hesitatingly grasped the rod in his hand. Just then "Big Tom" jumped to his feet and said, "Teacher, if you don't mind, I'll take Jim's licking for him."

"Very well, there is a certain law that one can take another's punishment for him. Are you all agreement?"

With the classes consent Tom removed his coat, and after five strokes the rod broke. The teacher bowed his head and thought, "How can I finish this awful task?"

Then he heard the entire class sobbing and what did he see? Little Jim had reached up and caught Tom with both arms around the neck. "Tom, I'm awful sorry, Tom, I was so hungry. I'll love you till I die for taking my licking for me. I'll love you forever!"

Yes there is a certain law that one can take another's punishment for him. The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Author Unknown

The Parable of the Push-Ups and the Donuts

There was a certain Professor of Religion named Dr. Christianson who taught at a small college in the Western United States.

Dr. Christianson taught the required survey course in Christianity at this particular institution. Every student was required to take this course his or her freshman year regardless of his or her major.

Although Dr. Christianson tried hard to communicate the essence of the Gospel in his class, he found that most of his students looked upon the course as nothing but required drudgery. Despite his best efforts, most students refused to take Christianity seriously.

One particular year Dr. Christianson had a special student named Steve. Steve was only a freshman but was studying with the intent of going on to a seminary to enter the ministry. Steve was popular, he was well-liked, and he was an imposing physical specimen. He was now the starting center on the school football team and was also the best student in the professor's class.

One day, Dr. Christianson asked Steve to stay after class so he could talk with him. He asked Steve, "How many pushups can you do?"

Steve answered, "I do about 200 every night."

"200? That's pretty good, Steve!" Dr. Christianson said. "Do you think you could do 300?"

Steve replied, "I don't know...I've never done 300 at a time."

"Do you think you could?" again asked Dr. Christianson.

"Well, I can try," said Steve.

"Can you do 300 in sets of 10? I have a class project in mind, and I need you to do about 300 pushups in sets of ten for this to work. Can you do it? I need you to tell me you can do it," said the professor.

Steve said, "Well...I think I can...yeah, I can do it."

Dr. Christianson said, "Good! I need you to do this on Friday. Let me explain what I have in mind."

Friday came, and Steve got to class early and sat in the front of the room. When class started, the professor pulled out a big box of donuts. These weren't the normal kinds of donuts, they were the extra fancy BIG kind, with creamy centers and frosting swirls.

Everyone was pretty excited it was Friday. It was the last class of the day, and they were going to get an early start on the weekend with a party in Dr. Christianson's class!

Dr. Christianson went to the first girl in the first row and asked, "Cynthia, do you want to have one of these donuts?"

Cynthia replied, "Yes."

Dr. Christianson then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so that Cynthia can have a donut?"

"Sure." Steve jumped down from his desk to do a quick ten. Then Steve back to his desk. Dr. Christianson put a donut on Cynthia's desk.

Dr. Christianson then went to Joe, the next person, and asked, "Joe, do you want a donut?"

Joe also replied, "Yes."

Dr. Christianson asked, "Steve would you do ten pushups so Joe can have a donut?"

Steve did ten pushups, and Joe got a donut.

And so it went, down the first aisle, Steve did ten pushups for every person before they got their donut. Then Dr. Christianson got to the second aisle and the next student named Scott. Scott was on the basketball team and in as good condition as Steve. He was very popular and never lacking for female companionship. When the professor asked, "Scott do you want a donut?"

Scott's reply was, "Well, can I do my own pushups?"

Dr. Christianson said, "No, Steve has to do them."

Then Scott said, "Well, I don't want one then."

Dr. Christianson shrugged and then turned to Steve and asked, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so Scott can have a donut he doesn't want?"

With perfect obedience, Steve started to do ten pushups.

Scott said, "HEY! I said I didn't want one!"

Dr. Christianson said, "Look, this is my classroom, my class, my desks, and these are my donuts. Just leave it on the desk if you don't want it." And he put a donut on Scott's desk.

Now by this time, Steve had begun to slow down a little. He just stayed on the floor between sets because it took a lot of effort to be getting up and down. And, there was perspiration coming out around his brow.

Dr. Christianson now started down the third row. Now the students were beginning to get a little angry.

Dr. Christianson asked Jenny, "Jenny, do you want a donut?"

Sternly, Jenny said, "No." Then Dr. Christianson asked Steve, "Steve, would you do ten more pushups so Jenny can have a donut that she doesn't want?" Steve did ten, and Jenny got a donut.

By now, a growing sense of uneasiness filled the room. The students were beginning to say "No" and yet there were all these uneaten donuts on the desks.

Steve also had to really put forth a lot of extra effort to get these pushups done for each donut. There began to be a small pool of sweat on the floor beneath his face. His arms and brow were beginning to get red because of the physical effort involved.

Dr. Christianson then started down the fourth row. During his class, however, some students from other classes had wandered in and sat down on the ledge along the radiators that ran down the sides of the room. When the professor realized this, he did a quick count and saw that now there were 34 students in the room.

He started to worry if Steve would be able to make it.

Dr. Christianson went on to the next person and the next and the next. Near the end of that row, Steve was really having a rough time. He was taking a lot more time to complete each set.

A few moments later, Jason, a recent transfer student, came to the room and was about to come in when all the students yelled in one voice, "NO! Don't come in! Stay out!" Jason didn't know what was going on.

Steve picked up his head and said, "No, let him come in!"

Professor Christianson said, "You realize that if Jason comes in you will have to do ten pushups for him?"

Steve said, "Yes, let him come in. Give him a donut."

Dr. Christianson said, "Okay, Steve, I'll let you get Jason's out of the way right now. "Jason, do you want a donut?" Jason, new to the room hardly knew what was going on.

"Yes," he said, "give me a donut."

"Steve, will you do ten pushups so that Jason can have a donut?" Steve did ten pushups very slowly and with great effort. Jason, bewildered, was handed a donut and sat down.

Dr. Christianson finished the fourth row then started on those visitors seated by the heaters.

Steve's arms were now shaking with each pushup in a struggle to lift himself against the force of gravity. Sweat was profusely dropping off of his face and, by this time, there was no sound except his heavy breathing. There was not a dry eye in the room.

The very last two students in the room were two young women, both cheerleaders, and very popular. Dr. Christianson went to Linda, the second to last, and asked, "Linda, do you want a doughnut?"

Linda said, very sadly, "No, thank you."

Professor Christianson quietly asked, "Steve, would you do ten pushups so that Linda can have a donut she doesn't want?" Grunting from the effort, Steve did ten very slow pushups for Linda.

Then Dr. Christianson turned to the last girl, Susan. "Susan, do you want a donut?"

Susan, with tears flowing down her face, began to cry. "Dr. Christianson, why can't I help him?"

Dr. Christianson, with tears of his own, said, "No, Steve has to do it alone. I have given him this task and he is in charge of seeing that everyone has an opportunity for a donut whether they want it or not. When I decided to have a party this last day of class, I looked at my grade book. Steve is the only student with a perfect grade. Everyone else has failed a test, skipped class, or offered me inferior work.

"Steve told me that when a player messes up in football practice, he must do pushups. I told Steve that none of you could come to my party unless he paid the price by doing your pushups. He and I made a deal for your sakes.

"Steve, would you do ten pushups so Susan can have a donut?"

As Steve very slowly finished his last pushup, with the understanding that he had accomplished all that was required of him (having done 350 pushups) his arms buckled beneath him, and he fell to the floor.

Dr. Christianson turned to the room and said. "And so it was, that our Savior, Jesus Christ, on the cross, pled to the Father, 'into thy hands I commend my spirit.' With the understanding that He had done everything that was required of Him, he yielded up His life.

"There were also observers that day, who, like some in this room, chose to refuse the free gift."

Two students helped Steve up off the floor and to a seat. He was physically exhausted, but wearing a thin smile.

"Well done, good and faithful servant," said the professor, adding, "Not all sermons are preached in words."

Turning to his class the professor said, "My wish is that you might understand and fully comprehend all the riches of grace and mercy that have been given to you through the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for us all, now and forever.

"Whether or not we choose to accept His gift to us, the price has been paid. Wouldn't you be foolish and ungrateful to leave it laying on the desk?"

- Anonymous

The Atonement of Jesus Christ

In a small village nestled amidst rolling hills, there lived a young girl named Sarah. Sarah loved hearing stories about Jesus, a very special person who lived long ago. Jesus, God's Son, came to Earth to help everyone because they needed His help very much.

Long ago, there was a man and a woman who made a mistake and did something wrong. This made God sad because He loves us very much. It made people separate from God, which wasn't good because God wants everyone to be with Him forever.

But God had a plan to help. He knew people needed someone special to save them, so He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth. Jesus came to help because He loves everyone too!

Jesus did many amazing things while on Earth. He helped sick people feel better, made blind people see, and even fed a lot of people from just a little bit of food! But the most important thing He did was to save everyone from their mistakes.

To save everyone, Jesus knew He had to do something really hard. He had to suffer and die. But He was willing to do it because He loves everyone so much.

One day, Jesus went to a garden to pray. He felt very sad and scared because He knew He would have to suffer a lot to save everyone. But He did it anyway because He loves everyone more than anything.

Some people who didn't like Jesus hurt Him very badly. They put nails in His hands and feet and put Him on a cross to die. Jesus suffered a lot, but He never stopped loving everyone. He even forgave the people who hurt Him.

After Jesus died, something amazing happened! Three days later, He came back to life! This showed everyone that because of Jesus, they can live again too, even after they die.

Jesus did all of this because He loves everyone so much. He wants everyone to be happy and live with God forever. All everyone has to do is believe in Him, follow His teachings, and try to be like Him.

That's why it's called the Atonement—it's when Jesus made everything right again so everyone can be with God. And that's the most wonderful gift of love there ever was.

So, let's remember to be grateful for Jesus and His Atonement. He did something amazing to save everyone because He loves everyone more than anything in the world. And because of Him, everyone can be forgiven and live happily with God forever and ever. Amen.

