

Sunday morning  
teaching plan

Date:  
22<sup>nd</sup> March  
2026

<b>TITLE:</b>	Salvation
<b>THEME:</b>	The Life of Jesus
<b>AIM:</b>	To explore Jesus' teaching on salvation; to come to an understanding that the invitation is for everyone but that everyone has their own choice to make.

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Jesus told these stories at the height of his popularity, when many were flocking to him and yet within each there is the warning that not everyone who hears will believe. If this was the case with Jesus, Himself – there is some comfort here for our own ministries that not everyone may come to faith although that is ultimately our own and God's desire. At the end of the day, everyone has to make their own decision.

A second challenge within these stories is that some who think that they are securely within the kingdom with their ticket for heaven, are in fact a long way off.

### WARM UP

#### Open Sesame

Around the room there will be:

- A padlock (or several padlocks) and a variety of keys – only one which fits each padlock
- 5 sewing needles to thread
- A combination lock
- Different containers with lids. Only one lid fits each container.
- A shirt or similar with lots of buttons
- A set of stacking boxes

In groups they have 1 min per activity to complete as much as possible. Then move onto the next challenge.

**Teaching Point:** The stories Jesus told were about the difficulties involved in going through a doorway – not that the door is shut or locked, in fact the door is open...

Some things are difficult to open, but the doorway to God's kingdom is open but we put obstacles in the way of going through it.

## MAIN TEACHING

### The Narrow Door

Read Luke 13:24

Question:

What sort of things might prevent someone going through a door way (not metaphorical). Could get to chairs and a volunteer to represent the doorway...and ask why can't she/he go through the door way.

- Examples might include: having too much stuff to carry to fit through the narrowness of the gap,
- seeing a different doorway which looks more interesting or attractive,
- getting distracted just as they were about to go through,
- fear – not knowing what's on the other side of the door,
- a lack of understanding - knowing all about the door e.g. its colour, materials etc but not realising that it's something they can step through.

Now Read Luke 13:22-30.

Questions:

What do you think the door represents?

Why does the owner of the home say I don't know you even though they ate and drank with him?

What do you think it means about there are those that are last who will be first and first who will be last?

Jesus is saying that although many people had met him, talked with him and knew of him – this did not make them his followers. The only way to be a true follower or friend of Jesus is to give him your life. As you make that choice it's like stepping through a doorway from your old life to a totally new life: a new life with Jesus at the centre and a new life that starts at that moment of decision and carries on after death into eternal life.

Now (Maybe in pairs) think about what stops people becoming a Christian? Look back at the suggestions made about why someone might not go through a doorway.

Encourage to think about where they are in the doorway. Have they entered it or are there things stopping them entering?

There is a sense of urgency in this story - Jesus knows he is on the way to Jerusalem and has not got many days left to get his message across; perhaps we should have that same sense of urgency with all the insecurities of life today.

**Teaching Point:** To understand that the doorway to God's kingdom is always open but there can be obstacles in the way, preventing people making that step of faith.

### Party Time

What is the best party you have been to?

Was there a really good party you weren't able to go to?

Have you had a party that people didn't come to? What reasons did they give?

Read Luke 14:15-23.

Discuss the passage

What do you think is going on here? What is Jesus really talking about?

Who are the people initially invited to the party? If the party is heaven what reasons are those people initially accepting the invitation, then decided to not attend?

Jesus is the one throwing the party, and what a fantastic party it is – a party in heaven that never comes to an end. Jesus is saying how the Jews are invited initially, but many reject him so the invitation is immediately thrown open to everyone else. Many choose to come.

In the same way Jesus continues to invite everyone to come to know him, sometimes the ones who have always been to church turn down the invitation whilst others who have just heard about Jesus accept his invitation immediately.

Everyone who has heard about Jesus has that choice to accept Him as their Saviour and friend or to reject Him.

**Teaching Point:** All are invited to Jesus' heavenly banquet but not all choose to accept.

## Sowing Seeds

Van Gogh's paintings of the Parable of the Sower.

Ask them to draw a field, ready to be planted. They don't need to worry about details at this stage, hedges or fences would be ok, but just the basic field. Ask them to draw and colour lightly as they will be adding things as you tell the story.

Explain that at the time when Jesus told this story, He was travelling around the countryside healing people and telling the people about God's love for them and how they could be part of His kingdom. Many people were coming to listen. The disciples must have been really excited, seeing the crowds and seeing them respond to Jesus. Then Jesus tells this story.

Read Luke 8:4-15. Pause at the end of verse 5 and ask everyone to draw in a path in their field, draw some seeds on the path and then draw in the birds pecking up the seeds on the path.

Read verse 6. Pause. Everyone to draw some rocks and some seeds just beginning to sprout and some other seeds sprouting and withering away. Maybe they could add in the sun.

Read verse 7. Pause. Everyone to draw some seeds sprouting and growing to various heights and then on tops of this to draw taller, stronger weeds.

Read verse 8 and give everyone time to draw strong healthy plants with much fruit – they can draw whatever plants they like or a whole range! (e.g. tomatoes, sweetcorn, apple trees etc.)

Now ask everyone to look at their pictures and discuss (maybe in pairs) what they think Jesus meant by this story. If they are puzzled say they are in good company as the disciples were confused as well and then go on to read the rest of the story. Luke 8:9-15.

The farmer could be Jesus telling everyone about God's love and inviting everyone to follow Him, or it could be one of the disciples doing that or even any of the young people as they tell their friends about God. At first everyone is really pleased to listen but some people never choose to follow Jesus (the seed on the path), some do choose but get easily distracted by the next new thing to come along, the third group

hear, follow and may even become leaders in the church but in times of difficulty lose their faith and the fourth group are those who stay committed and as a result many others come to know and love Jesus.

Finish by saying that there are 2 important things for the young people to think about – what sort of plants do they want to be? i.e. do they want to be like the plants on the path, listening but not choosing to follow Jesus or like the plants in the good soil – listening, following and sharing God’s love with others. And, when they do tell others about God then they should pray that their friends will be like the good soil, but if they aren’t interested in hearing about God, then they mustn’t be discouraged or feel that they’ve given the message wrongly – that’s just the way it is sometimes. God calls us only to sow the seeds, what happens next is down to him.

**Teaching Point:** To consider the Parable of the Sower giving the young people the challenge of what type of soil they would like to be.

### TAKEAWAY

Jesus is inviting us to receive His salvation. Do we accept it? What does our heart believe? Consider whether we have accepted and therefore walked through that narrow door, taken up the invitation and are allowing God’s word to grow in us.

### EXTRA INFORMATION