

TEACHER GUIDE

TELL Bible Pathway

Part 1

Lesson 20



The Forgiveness of Sins and Eternal Life | tellnetwork.org

Lesson Goal: The goal of this class is to review the basic concepts of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus and God's blessing of eternal life.

Pre-Lesson Preparation: Read the story in Luke 23:32-43.

Compare and contrast the words and actions of the two criminals.

Why does the story of the believing criminal give us such hope and comfort?

What is our natural state without God?

How was Jesus' life of obedience a substitution?

For whom did Jesus die?

What did God declare in Christ's death?

What connects us to Jesus' blessing of salvation?

Live Class Greet those who are listening to the class.

Prayer Asks for God's blessings, focusing on the theme of the lesson, and effectively ending the greeting time and calling the lesson to order. The following prayer can be used:

Dear heavenly Father, we thank you for your deep love for us. Even though we are sinners, you sent your only Son to die in our place. Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to work faith in us. How we long for the day we will join you in heaven for eternity! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Introduce The Course

- a. Explain the purpose of the course.
- b. Ask all to show respect for the teacher and other students by writing appropriate questions and comments on the Facebook Live chat.
- c. Explain that the **TELL** method is a teaching style with the goal of telling others what you've learned. The letters **T-E-L-L** represent four sections of study: **T** for Think, **E** for Evaluate, **L** for Learn and **L** for Lead.

Think: A powerful introduction that gets you thinking about an interesting topic, or question

What do you say at the bedside of someone who is dying? Those final moments are so important for the spiritual welfare of that person. What are they going to hear from you? What will you respond to those moments when they are haunted by their past sins and they center on the law passages of the Bible instead of gospel ones? They may say to themselves, “God says that whoever loves me will keep my commandments. I haven’t done that. I am lost.” What will you say? Today we will talk about the account of the criminal on the cross in Luke 23. It gives us so much hope.

Evaluate (brings more meaning and context to the lesson)

1. Who are the characters in the story? *Jesus, the two criminals on Jesus’ right and left, the Jewish rulers, the soldiers*
2. What are the objects in this story? *Clothes, lots, wine vinegar, notice sign*
3. Where does this story take place? *Outside of Jerusalem, in a place called Golgotha*
4. When did this story happen? *Good Friday—the day Jesus was crucified*
5. What is the problem? *Jesus—the sinless Son of God—was being crucified even though he did nothing wrong. He was being unfairly mocked by not only the Jewish rulers but by one of the criminals who was being crucified alongside him.*
6. What events happened in the story? *As Jesus was being crucified, two criminals were also being crucified beside him. The people and the Jewish leaders who were watching the crucifixion mocked Jesus, as did one of the criminals. He taunted Jesus, saying, “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other criminal defended Jesus. He knew that he and his fellow criminal deserved to be punished for the crimes they had committed, but he knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong and didn’t deserve to die. He asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus came into his kingdom. Jesus assured the criminal, “Today you will be with me in paradise.”*
7. Is the problem solved? *Sometime during the hours of the crucifixion, the Holy Spirit created faith in the heart of the other criminal next to Jesus, who then so beautifully professed his faith by asking, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Because the criminal had faith, Jesus assured him that he would go to heaven upon his death.*

Learn (identify that sin is the problem and only God has the answer)

1. What is the main theme of the lesson? *Can you even imagine how relieved the criminal was? He had only been a follower of Jesus for a few minutes. He didn’t deserve Jesus’ response. But therein lies the good news that we also cling to. No matter how long we look, we will never find anything inside ourselves that is worthy of receiving forgiveness from God. Nothing. Jesus was the only answer for this criminal dying on the cross, and Jesus is the only answer for us as well. Even this hardened criminal, who had surely done terrible things in life, inherited eternal life due to his saving faith.*
2. What sin does this lesson teach you to confess? *Our sin of thinking that we can do a single thing to earn salvation. No matter how “good” we think we are, or the good things that we do on this earth, we cannot earn our salvation. We are still sinners in God’s eyes. Only Jesus’ perfect life and innocent death purchased our salvation. We also need to confess our sins of pride and*

arrogance when we are tempted to compare ourselves to others and think that they are “more sinful” than we are. There are no degrees of sin. All people were equally sinful in God’s eyes before Jesus’ act of redemption. If any sinner has saving faith—no matter what sins they have committed on earth—they will spend eternity enjoying the glories of heaven.

3. Where do you see the love of God in the lesson? *Jesus loved the criminal on the cross and saved him, despite the horrible things that criminal had done in his life. We might not be a criminal who outwardly breaks the law, but we are sinful all the same. When God the Father looks at us, he sees us as washed clean and righteous due to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.*
4. What does God teach you to do in the lesson? *God teaches me to be thankful that Jesus loved us so much that he suffered torture and death to be our substitute. He also teaches me to be thankful that my salvation doesn’t depend on anything that I have done—or haven’t done. It all depends on Jesus’ work on my behalf.*

Lead (share this with a group of your brothers and sisters in Christ)

1. What would be a good situation in which to share this message? *We can share this message with someone to tell them that as long as they draw breath, it’s never too late to believe. This would be a perfect message to share with someone who is facing death. We can assure them that no matter what they did in their life—no matter what their past sins are—if they believe in Jesus as their Savior, they will have eternal life. It doesn’t matter if they have believed for 100 years or just a few minutes.*

Additional questions (add depth to the lesson)

1. What is our natural state without God? *We are dead in our trespasses and sins and are unable to save ourselves.*
2. How was Jesus’ life of obedience a substitution? *Jesus lived the perfect life that we could not live, and he gave us all his perfection and good works so that we have a perfect record before our Father in heaven.*
3. For whom did Jesus die? *Jesus died for all the sins of all the people of all time.*
4. What did God declare in Christ’s death? *In Christ’s death (and confirmed by Jesus’ resurrection), God declared all people not guilty before him and perfect in his sight.*
5. What connects us to Jesus’ blessing of salvation? *The gift of faith, our simple confidence in God’s promises, connects us to the salvation God won for us.*

What will heaven be like? Name the things we know for certain about heaven. *There are many things we do not know about heaven. God doesn’t give us all the details. However, the Bible does speak about the incredible joys we will have in heaven. Revelation 7:9-17 is a good section to lead people to. Since heaven is beyond our imagination and experience, God often describes heaven in terms of what it is not like. For example, there are no tears of sadness in heaven. We know what tears feel like here on earth, so knowing that heaven has no cause for sadness gives us certain clues about heaven.*

Lesson Wrap-Up

1. What are the basic concepts of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus and God's blessing of eternal life?

Allow time for answers and various wordings, but discuss how without God, we are dead in our sins. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. Thankfully, Jesus lived a perfect life for us because we couldn't. His perfect record is now ours. Jesus died for all sins of all people of all time, and we are declared not guilty in God's sight. We are connected to salvation through the gift of our faith.

Closing End with a prayer thanking God for the people he has brought together to learn about him and his Word, or with a blessing for the group.

Extra Information for the Teacher: Topics that May Come Up During the Class

Many Christians believe in the teaching of the rapture where, before the Last Day, good believers will disappear suddenly and be taken away to heaven. They base this teaching on an incorrect reading of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, which talks about a type of "rapture" but is nothing like the rapture that millennialists teach. (At this time it would be good for the teacher to lead a careful reading through of the Thessalonians passage.)

Besides not being a biblical teaching, the teaching of the rapture also goes against the pillar doctrine of salvation by grace alone. One website, promoting the doctrine of the rapture, says the following about preparation for the rapture:

"Of course, love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself is just the starting point. Knowing how to do this in practice takes further information. Thankfully, Jesus spent much of his time fleshing exactly this out. You can find most of the specifics of what to do listed in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7). Other parts of the Gospels repeat and flesh out areas of change further. Jesus describes them as "good fruit" you should have and bad fruit you shouldn't have....But if actions don't follow your belief, then your belief or faith is not focused on the right thing. You think Jesus is only savior without being Lord who requires obedience to be your Savior. This puts you on 'shaky ground'" (<https://escapeallthesethings.com/rapture-requirements>).

Unfortunately, this website follows what most say about the rapture. How does that teaching go against salvation in Christ alone by faith alone? Let the students discuss. As needed, add the following thoughts.

On whom should we place our confidence for eternal life? On Jesus. John 10:25-30 would be a good verse to use to explain further the Good News we have in him.

How does this quote use the law incorrectly? This quote seeks to use the law as a means of preparing ourselves for Christ's coming by our own actions and improvement. The main purpose of the law, however, is to show us our sins and prepare us for the message of Jesus' free and full salvation (Romans 3:20).

How does this quote make Christians insecure in their salvation? This quote, and the teaching of the rapture, causes Christians to look inward at themselves for their confidence instead of at Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Millennialism. Millennialism is the belief that the world will experience 1,000 years of nearly indescribable prosperity and peace either under the reign of the Christian Church or Jesus himself (there are many varieties of millennialism). Millennialists misinterpret Revelation 20 and also forget Jesus' own Word when he says that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). The false teaching of millennialism is complicated, and the teacher is encouraged to read the section on millennialism found in Lyle Lange's doctrine book *For God So Loved the World*.

Possible extra question: How does the teaching of millennialism shift our focus from Jesus and the home he is preparing for us in heaven?

