

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: Jeremiah 17:5-8
1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20
Gospel: Luke 6:17, 20-26

Mary Clare, Lucy, Vincent, and Hillary came downstairs this Sunday morning to find Mom, Dad, and Baby Ben huddled in the kitchen. It looked like they were conspiring about something.

They overheard Dad tell Ben, "And that's when you blow really hard, okay?" Ben nodded gleefully.

Then Dad turned around and saw the others. "Oh, hi kids!" he greeted them. "I think we're ready for our Sunday Gospel reading, aren't we Ben?"

Ben giggled. It seemed like something was up.

Everyone came into the living room where Mom was waiting with a pack of matches and four long, white, taper candles.

"Are we going to do our Gospel reading in the dark?" Vincent quipped.

"You'll see," said Mom. "For today's reading, I want you four to stand in a straight line and hold one of these." Mrs. Pauline handed a candle to Vincent, Hillary, Lucy, and one to Mary Clare. "Now, I think we're ready," she said to her husband.

Dad opened the Bible to the Gospel of Luke. "Today we are going to hear Luke's account of Jesus' teaching called the 'Sermon on the Plain.'" Dad started.

"Dad, isn't it called, the 'Sermon on the Mount'?" Vincent corrected him.

"Good question, Vincent!" Dad replied. "In Matthew's account, it is called the 'Sermon on the Mount,' because Matthew saw the event as a mountain-top experience. Luke, on the other hand, saw it as a call to go forth, move straight ahead, and proclaim the message of Jesus. In each account, though, the lesson is the same."

Vincent's eyebrows went up in delight. He liked learning new things.

"Okay, we're ready to go," Dad said. "I'll read, and Mom and Ben are my helpers." Dad began, " ' [Jesus] came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal

region of Tyre and Sidon came to hear him ... And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said, "Blessed are you who are poor, for the kingdom of God is yours." ' " (Luke 6:17, 20)

With that, Mom took her matches and lit the candle Mary Clare was holding. The glow lit up her face.

Dad continued, " 'Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied.' " (Luke 6:21a) Mom reached over and lit Vincent's candle. He grinned broadly.

" 'Blessed are you who are now weeping, for you will laugh ... ' " (Luke 6:21b) and once again, Mom lit the candle Hillary was holding. Her face lit up as well.

" 'Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude and insult you, and denounce your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.' " (Luke 6:22-23a) As Dad was finishing the words, Mrs. Pauline lit the last candle that Lucy was holding. All four candles glowed, and so did the smiles on the kids.



But then the mood changed as Dad kept reading. " 'But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.' " (Luke 6:24)

Mom pointed to Ben and, right on cue, he stepped up and blew out Mary Clare's candle.

"What's this?" she lamented, as her candle went out.

And Dad went on, " 'But woe to you who are filled now; for you will be hungry,' " (Luke 6:25a) and again, Ben stepped up and puffed out Vincent's candle. The look on Vincent's face was shock.

" 'Woe to you who laugh now, for you will grieve and weep.' " (Luke 6:25b) Then Ben eyed Hillary's candle and puffed that one out, too. Her bottom lip came out.

" 'Woe to you when all speak well of you, for their ancestors treated the false prophets in this way,' " (Luke 6:26) and Ben moved toward Mary Clare's candle. She tried to protect it, but he got it anyway.

"Dad!" she said. "We all had these nice candles going, and Ben blew them right out!"

"That's right, Mary Clare!" Dad said. "In this Gospel reading, there are four BLESSEDs and four WOES. When we hear these words of Jesus, we are all *glowing* with the *blesseds*, because they show us our need for God.

The woes are when we are self-sufficient and think we don't need God. Then the 'light goes out of our lives,' and we are left in the 'darkness.' "

"Great point, Dad," Vincent said. "I like this example of the candles, except *one* part."

"What's that, Vincent?" his dad wondered.

"Well, when Ben blew out the candles, did he have to spit at the same time?" Vincent laughed as he wiped his shirt.

Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied.

Luke 6:21a

Try this example at home.

How do you feel when you are holding a lit candle?

How do you feel just holding an unlit candle?

If there is time, read Matthew's account of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12.