



## Called to Proclaim

### Lesson Overview

#### Week of January 3

#### Suggested Material for As Your Students Arrive:

- Photos of people who are hurting

#### 1 Life Need:

1 Discuss why our hurting world needs to hear Jesus' message of good news.

#### 2 Bible Learning:

2 Examine what Jesus' message of good news is to a hurting world.

#### Suggested Material

- *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit*: Poster and Reproducible Sheet—Called into His Light

#### 3 Bible Application:

3 Consider ways we can spread Jesus' message of good news to a hurting world.

#### Suggested Material

- *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit*: Reproducible sheet—Hope for Our Hurting World

#### 4 Life Response:

4 Intentionally share Jesus' message with a hurting person.

**Church/Home Theme:**  
Christ Jesus Is Our Savior

**Lesson Focus:**  
Spread Jesus' message of good news for a hurting world.

**Lesson Scripture:**  
Luke 4:14-22a

Jesus started His ministry in Galilee, where He spoke God's truths with authority. At the same time, He healed the physically sick and the emotionally weary. He quickly became known as a miracle worker, and the masses began to seek Him out.

**Jesus Returned Home**—On one particular occasion, Jesus visited His hometown: Nazareth. Even though He had earned the reputation as One performing miracles, He did very little of those among those who knew Him growing up. The neighbors and friends spoke of Jesus as Mary's little boy or the carpenter's son. For years they had watched Jesus help His father with his carpentry business or play with His siblings. Could the boy next door actually be the Messiah?

**Jesus' Announcement**—At the synagogue, Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2, a text people knew referred to the coming Christ. Jesus ended His reading of Isaiah with a shocking statement: the passage was about Him. The people listening clearly understood His bold statement. He claimed to be the Messiah who would usher in a spiritual year of Jubilee, provide healing to those with broken hearts, acceptance to the rejected, sight for the blind, and freedom for the oppressed.

**Jesus' Rejection**—Sadly, Jesus hometown folk refused to believe His proclamations. They became indignant when He taught about God's grace, mercy, and favor for everyone. Their rejection materialized into anger and hate—they even attempted to throw Jesus off a cliff (Luke 4:23-30).

**Learning from Jesus**—Some Christians who have undertaken Christ's mission encounter the same kind of resistance. They see a suffering world, extend the love of Christ, but people turn away, refusing to receive the truth of the Gospel. Jesus continued on in spite of the resistance of unbelievers. He strengthens His followers to do likewise—through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

### As Your Students Arrive

Before class, collect a few pictures of people hurting—for example, a young lady crying, a mother standing over her dying child in the hospital or a homeless man begging for food. Place these pictures on the wall for your students to observe as they enter the class. As your students arrive have them to reflect on the pictures. After a few minutes ask them, if they had an opportunity to speak to one of these people, what would they say to them? Have a few students share their answers and take note of how many of them mention Jesus in

their answers. Even we Christians tend to look to other places to help those hurting instead of pointing them to Jesus. Yes, maybe the person needs counseling, healing or food, but they also need to know Jesus. Jesus can and will guide them on how to be delivered from their hurt. Encourage your students to see Jesus' message as the answer to our hurting world.

### Link to Last Week

A few students may want to share about any changes in their life the Holy Spirit brought this past week.

# 1 Life Need

Discuss why our hurting world needs to hear Jesus' message of good news.

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## Called to Proclaim

Hey man, once you get out of this place, you're not supposed to come back," said Perez, the prison guard.

Linzell smiled as he spread his arms wide, and Perez ran the handheld metal detector over his body. Perez had worked at the maximum-security prison for five of the 11 years that Linzell had been there. He was one of a very few guards who had not given Linzell any grief for finding "jail-house religion."

"I'm looking forward to hearing you speak at service today," Perez told Linzell when Perez finished the body check.

"Right. Just what these prisoners need, more Jesus talk," said another prison guard that Linzell did not know.

Linzell had been out of prison for five years. He was married, working a decent job, and was taking a few online seminary courses. The latter came about after encouragement from his wife and some nudging from his pastor.

"How could God ever use me?" Linzell had asked.

Still, Linzell had felt the pull of God to preach. He had ignored it for more than two years, until he could no longer.

Once Linzell yielded, he also surrendered to preparing for the call. It had been both a scary and a glorious journey.

"Don't listen to Dusty," Perez said, breaking in on Linzell's thoughts. "There are several men who have been anxiously waiting for service to start, and there are a couple of men who remember you!"

**1. What evidence do you see that we are living in a hurting world?**

**2. What temporary solutions do hurting people often look to for help?**

**3. Why is Jesus good news for our hurting world?**

Read the anecdote in *Comprehensive Bible Study*, then form small groups for discussion and respond to **Questions 1, 2, and 3.**

Question 1 directs your students to reflect on how well we see that our world is hurting and in need of Jesus' good news. Encourage them to share specific examples of hurting people and circumstances they have noticed lately. If they don't want to name names, they can talk about situations in general terms.

For Question 2, students may say that people turn to temporary solutions such as taking drugs or alcohol to get rid of depression, instead of letting Jesus' good news transform their hearts. Temporary solutions seem quick, easy, and readily available whereas permanent, eternal solutions may seem unlikely to bring much immediate relief.

Question 3 encourages your students to see why people don't understand that Jesus' good news is the solution they need to their problems. He provides healing for our hurts and the only permanent solution to the ills of our lives. Jesus not only demonstrated through His miracles that He is the answer to our hurting world, but He clearly proclaimed that He came to heal the brokenhearted, deliver the captives, and give liberty to all in need.

LESSON FOCUS: Spread Jesus' message of good news for a hurting world.

# 2 Bible Learning

Examine what Jesus' message of good news is to a hurting world.



On the poster sheet, read the fifth paragraph, and on the poster, note the photo of the Isaiah scroll. Jesus would have read from a scroll like that one at the synagogue in Nazareth.

## PROCLAIMING FREEDOM

Read Luke 4:14-19 and highlight these main points in your class discussion of the Scripture:

- After Jesus' temptation, He returned to Galilee empowered with the Holy Spirit.

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Order of Service in the Synagogue

The normal order of service in a synagogue in Jesus' day was not unlike that of many church services today, especially in more liturgical churches. The service typically began with an opening prayer and praise including the reciting of the Shema ("Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One"). Next, someone would read a selection from the Torah or Law (the first five books of today's Bible), then a selection from the Prophets (which included both the historical and prophetic writings of the Old Testament).

Finally, there would come the sermon, or word of exhortation for which the assigned speaker would sit down to teach. Since there were not professional clergy (the rabbis held secular trades to earn a living) the synagogue leader could invite anyone to teach. In many cases, the exhortation would be given by a visiting teacher who was expert in the Word (for example, Paul in Acts 13:16; 17:2). On this occasion, before the people He had grown up with, Jesus was the expert teacher—and He still is.

- As Jesus taught in the synagogues, He became known and praised by others.
- Even in His hometown, Jesus did not deviate from His routine of worshiping in the synagogue on the Sabbath day.
- Jesus specifically chose to read the passage Isaiah that proclaimed freedom for those who are hurting: the poor, prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed.

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## Proclaiming Freedom

*Luke 4:14-19, KJV*

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

*Luke 4:14-19, NIV*

<sup>14</sup>Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup>He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup>He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

The same Spirit who had sustained Jesus during His temptation by Satan in the wilderness (Luke 4:1) now led Him to His home region of Galilee, where "news about him spread through the whole countryside." Jesus taught in the synagogues "and everyone praised him" (vss. 14-15).

At last He arrived in His hometown of Nazareth, among the people He grew up with and likely had served as a



Further commentary on this Scripture passage can be found on pp. 825-827 in *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*.

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

The Spirit led Jesus to His home region of Galilee. From Luke 4:23, we know that the people had already heard of the healings He had performed in Capernaum, and that because of this, “news about him spread through the whole countryside.” Verse 15 tells us that He taught in the synagogues throughout Galilee, and that “everyone praised him.”

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carpenter or builder. As it was still the beginning of His ministry, Jesus had likely not been away long. And once again, on the Sabbath, Jesus went into the synagogue to teach. It is interesting to note it “was his custom” (vs. 16) to go to the synagogue; even Jesus, the Son of God, understood the need to be among God’s people for worship.

As He stood up to read, Jesus was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus took the scroll, unrolled it, and “found the place” He was to read from, near the very end of the book of Isaiah (61:1-2a). Whether the passage was predetermined or chosen specifically by Jesus, it was the perfect word for the moment.

The passage spoke of the Spirit being on the Messiah, God’s anointed one, who would bring five good things to those in need: 1) good news to the poor; 2) freedom to prisoners; 3) new sight to the blind; 4) release to the oppressed; and 5) forgiveness to debtors (as in the Year of Jubilee). The “year of the Lord’s favor” likely refers to the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:9-15), during which time debts were cancelled and slaves were set free. Jesus would fulfill this prophecy in both literal and spiritual ways.

The importance of this Scripture from Isaiah is shown in Jesus’ message to the disciples of John the Baptist. When John’s disciples came with his question of whether or not Jesus was truly the Messiah, Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor” (Matt. 11:4-5).

Jesus stopped His reading midway through Isaiah 61:2, leaving unspoken the remainder of Isaiah’s statement: “and the day of vengeance of our God.” Possibly this is because this day of vengeance will not occur until Jesus’ second coming. For now, He proclaimed only the prophecy that those hearing Him would witness with their own eyes.

**4.** *Where did the Spirit lead Jesus? What was the initial response to His arrival?*

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

Jesus “found the place” He was to read from in the scroll of Isaiah, near the very end (Isa. 61:1-2a). The passage spoke of the Messiah, God’s anointed one whom the Spirit would rest upon, and whom would proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners and the oppressed, recovery of sight for the blind, and the year of the Lord’s favor (Luke 4:18-19). Jesus’ listeners would soon discover that this time was no longer in the future.

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 6

Jesus stopped His reading midway through Isaiah 61:2, after “the year of the Lord’s favor.” He left out the remainder of the sentence: “and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn.” That could be because this day of vengeance will not occur until after Jesus’ return. For now, Jesus proclaimed only

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Cost of Proclaiming

Luke relayed very little of Jesus’ sermon, but detailed the crowd’s mercurial response. After their initial amazement, they asked “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” (Luke 4:22b). They couldn’t believe Jesus could be the Messiah, and He immediately recognized this. “[Y]ou will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum’ (vss. 23-24). He knew they wanted a sign (healing). Instead, He cited Elijah and Elisha, who healed no one in Israel but instead healed the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17) and Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5). This disbelieving crowd would see no miracles from Jesus.

The people became furious. They drove Jesus out of town and intended to throw Him off a cliff. “But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way” (vs. 30) back to Capernaum—where He continued preaching and resumed performing miracles (vss. 31-41).

that part of Isaiah’s prophecy that those hearing Him would personally bear witness to.

## BIBLE EXTRA

### Jesus in Nazareth

Although Jesus grew up in the village of Nazareth, He did not spend much time there after the start of His ministry. However, after His baptism in the Jordan River and time of fasting and temptation in the Judean wilderness for 40 days (Luke 4:1-13), Jesus returned to Nazareth and taught in the synagogue where He had grown up. The people who listened to His message knew Him best as Joseph’s son (vs. 4:22b), although they had already heard about the healings He had performed in nearby Capernaum (vs. 23).

As the reading and teaching in synagogues was often done by visiting teachers, it would not have been unusual for Jesus to get up and read and teach Scripture to the people of His hometown. However, what He said after His reading changed everything.

## BIBLE EXTRA

### Jesus Fulfilling Scripture

There are many, many passages of Old Testament Scripture that Jesus fulfilled during His coming to earth—anywhere from 200 to 400 depending on how you read the Scriptures. J. Barton Payne, in his *Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*, gives a list of 191 prophecies that he deems as having a “personal reference to Christ.” However, many of those fulfillments were understood in hindsight, once Jesus had returned to heaven.

Today’s passage, though, is one of several where Jesus Himself proclaimed that He has fulfilled the words of Old Testament Scripture. In fact, Jesus said explicitly about the Scriptures in John 5:39, 46: “You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me. . . If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.” Other examples where Jesus testified about His fulfilling of Scripture include Matthew 26:55-56; Mark 14:49; Luke 18:31; 24:27, 44; and John 13:18; 15:25.

## PROCLAIMING FULFILLMENT

Read Luke 4:20-22a with your class and note these important points in the text:

- All eyes in the synagogue were focused on Jesus as they waited for His teaching on Isaiah.
- To their surprise, Jesus proclaimed that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in person.
- Jesus told them He had come to give freedom to hurting people.

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 7

“The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him” (vs. 20). There was clearly an attitude of fascination and expectation. The crowd

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5. What is significant about the passage of Scripture Jesus read in the synagogue?

6. What is significant about the part of this passage from Isaiah Jesus did not read?

### Proclaiming Fulfillment

Luke 4:20-22a, KJV

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

Luke 4:20-22a, NIV

<sup>20</sup>Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.

<sup>21</sup>He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

<sup>22</sup>All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.

Once Jesus had finished reading this brief passage from Isaiah, He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue attendant who had handed to Him, and sat down. Standing was the usual posture for the reading portion of the synagogue message, while sitting usually indicated teaching.

All eyes were fixed on Jesus. Everyone in the synagogue wondered what this teacher from their own hometown would have to say next about this Spirit-filled, anointed Messiah who had been promised by Isaiah hundreds of years ago—who they now hoped would bring freedom, healing, and the Lord’s favor to a hurting, beaten-down, Roman-dominated people. Even given their desire for liberation, they could not have anticipated Jesus’ next words.

Jesus began—He wasted no time in proclaiming—that “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (vs. 21, emphasis added). Those listening to Jesus’ message were beholding its very fulfillment. This was the year of the Lord’s favor where, both physically and spiritually speaking,

had heard about Jesus' miracles, and now He had just read a passage about the coming Messiah who would liberate His people. As the people of Israel had been under harsh Roman rule for decades, they longed to see this promise fulfilled—and what Jesus had to say about it.

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 8

Jesus immediately declared, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (vs. 21). This very time was the year of the Lord's favor where, both physically and spiritually speaking, good news was proclaimed to the poor, the blind regained sight, prisoners and the oppressed were set free, and debts were canceled. In other words, Jesus had just

announced that He was the Messiah.

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 9

The crowd's initial response to Jesus' message is positive: "All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips" (vs. 22). Jesus continued to speak, and those in the synagogue were astonished at what they heard. However, as verses 22b-30 relate, the crowd quickly turned on Jesus afterward. Regardless of the crowd's reactions, positive or negative, Jesus consistently proclaimed the truth.

good news was proclaimed to the poor, the blind regained sight, prisoners and the oppressed were set free, and debts were canceled. In short, Jesus had just declared, to the people of His hometown, that He was the Messiah!

It is interesting also to note the tone and style of Jesus' words. He didn't shout or make a big deal. He literally didn't mention Himself. He said only, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." He simply proclaimed the truth and let it speak for itself about Him. But that calm proclamation changed everything.

At first, the response to Jesus' message was positive. "All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips" (vs. 22a). After their initial reaction, however, the crowd quickly changed their opinion and doubted that this man from their own hometown could be the long-promised Messiah (vss. 22b-30).

Ultimately, it wouldn't matter. Jesus would go on fulfilling everything He had just proclaimed—and to fulfill every other promise ever made in God's Word about Him.

**7. What is the crowd's attitude as Jesus prepared to speak? What fueled this attitude?**



A reconstruction of a first-century synagogue at Nazareth Village in Israel.

**8. What did Jesus say about the passage from Isaiah He had just read—and therefore, about Himself?**

**9. How did the crowd react to Jesus' message, at first?**

### WINDOW ON THE WORD

#### The Gospel

Biblically, the words "gospel" and "good news" can be used interchangeably, since both refer to the message of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. The Gospel or Good News is the story of redemption of mankind through Jesus coming to earth to die for our sins and being resurrected that we may live. It's a truth that must not only be head knowledge, but must be responded to personally.

# 3 Bible Application

Consider ways we can spread Jesus' message of good news to a hurting world.

This lesson step provides your students an opportunity to consider how they can tell those who are hurting about Jesus. Make copies of the activities to give to each group. Make copies of the handout from the Resource Kit for the group using it.



## Handout:

### 'Hope for Our Hurting World'

Read the handout and follow the instructions. When you complete the handout, share your answers with one another and then with the rest of the class.

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

Read "Reaching Out to the Hurting" from the student book and respond to **Questions 10, 11, and 12**. Hurting people are all around us, but we often hide our hurts from one another, especially in church where we prefer everyone thinks we have a good, happy life. We can look for non-verbal signs people give of their hurts such as sad faces, silence, and sighs, and pray for those people. How observant we are depends on how well we listen to the Holy Spirit nudging us to help those around us who need the Lord.

### Getting the Hurting to Hear the Good News

Divide the class into two groups. Have one group read Mark 2:1-5 and the other group read Luke 9:37-43. Have each group discuss the following questions, then as a class share their answers.

- How was the hurting person able to come to Jesus?
- Describe how the person was hurting and what they needed from Jesus.
- What can you do to help a hurting person hear Jesus' good news?

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## Reaching Out to the Hurting

Lydia sat in the corner alone, in the midst of a crowded school auditorium. No one knew that she had tried to take her life last night. She didn't want to be in school, but she definitely couldn't stay at home where her abuse occurred. Before the closing of the assembly, Lydia thought she left the auditorium unnoticed. However, her math teacher, Mrs. Matthews, saw her from the time she entered the auditorium.

During math class, Mrs. Matthews continued to observe Lydia's isolation from her classmates. She also noticed that Lydia's grades were dropping. She started to pray for Lydia as she watched her class and that God would give her an opportunity to speak to Lydia and she would open up to her.

Later that week, Mrs. Matthews saw Lydia waiting at the bus stop and started talking to her about the long wait for the bus and other small talk. Lydia was surprised by Mrs. Matthews talking to her, but she politely answered her. Over the next month, whenever Mrs. Matthews saw Lydia alone, she would go over and start a conversation.

Finally, Mrs. Matthews ran into Lydia off the school campus and was able to share with Lydia more about her own life. She told Lydia how she was bullied in school and then one day she learned about someone who would never bully her. Mrs. Matthews simply told Lydia about how Jesus came to help those that are hurting and His unconditional love for her.

Lydia didn't respond right away, but Mrs. Matthews noticed that she smiled more in class. She also saw Lydia sitting at the bus stop reading the New Testament that she had given her. She prayed that Lydia would not only share with her, but would accept Jesus' love and allow Him to heal her.

**10.** How often do you notice those hurting around you?

**11.** What roles do the Holy Spirit and prayer play in helping those hurting?

**12.** How are you reaching out to hurting people in your world?

# 4 Life Response

Intentionally share Jesus' message with a hurting person.

Your class has discussed and studied the importance of Jesus' message of good news to our hurting world. Ask your students to read "Jesus Is the Answer" in the student book and give them time to answer the question.

We frequently do not notice those who are hurting around us. Often times, we have to listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance to show us those that are hurting. Encourage your students to seek out and share Jesus' good news with those who are hurting.

Close the class by allowing your students a few minutes of silent, individual prayer time to ask the Holy Spirit to guide them to those that are hurting in their world. Then ask a few students to pray aloud for our hurting world. Encourage your students to continually ask the Holy Spirit to give them an opportunity to share Jesus' good news to hurting people this next week.

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## Jesus Is the Answer

Jesus' message of good news never grows old. Technology may increase, fads may change, but God's Word never changes. The answer to the troubles of our hurting world today is still Jesus.

► Do you know someone who is discouraged, lacks peace of mind, or really doesn't see any reason for living? Ask God to give you an opportunity in the next week to share with that person Jesus' message of good news. If you can't think of anyone who needs to hear of Jesus' good news, then take time and pray for God to show you someone this week who is hurting and needs to hear Jesus' good news.

### KEY VERSE

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

—Luke 4:18-19, KJV

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

—Luke 4:18-19, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of January 4 through January 10

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

**Mon.** Exodus 3:1-12—Called to Lead Israelites from Egypt.

**Tues.** Judges 6:11-16—Called to Deliver Israelites from Midianites.

**Wed.** Isaiah 6:1-8—Called and Cleansed for Ministry.

**Thurs.** Luke 9:57-62—Single Mindedness Required to Follow Jesus.

**Fri.** Romans 2:1-11—Repentance, Goal of God's Kindness.

**Sat.** John 21:15-19—Jesus Calls Peter to Ministry.

**Sun.** Luke 5:1-11—Don't Be Afraid to Catch People.



As the class members are leaving, hand out copies of this week's *Power for Living*. Take or mail copies of *Lesson Leaflet* to those who couldn't be with you today, or send them to those you would like to join your class.

## Before Teaching Next Week's Lesson

Before next week, read Luke 5:1-11 and ask your students to think of a time they were on a "mission" of some kind such as a "mission" to finally finish a project they had started some time before or to get something done in a specific amount of time.