

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES FOR

Sunday 5th July 2020

This week's story is in two parts.

The first is about what we have been promised and how we feel when it actually happens but isn't what we were hoping for or expecting.

The second part is about sharing our troubles and worries that we carry around with us and how much easier it is when we share them with God.

Getting Started

Find a piece of paper, a pencil and some pens and start to think about what a dragon looks like.

What colour is it? Red, like a Welsh dragon? Or lots of different colours, like a Chinese dragon? Or some other colour and more like a giant lizard?

How big is your dragon? Small enough to carry around in your arms? Or so large you could ride on its back?!

Does it have huge wings? How long is its tail?

Is it friendly or does it breathe fire at anyone who comes too close?

Hopefully you now have a picture in your mind about what your dragon looks like.

Try to draw it on your paper.

How did it go? Did you manage to draw exactly what you were wanting and expecting? Or are you disappointed with what you ended up with?

God promised the people that He would send them a prophet, John the Baptist, to prepare them for the arrival of Jesus and then He would send them Jesus, His son, to teach them about the Kingdom of God. But when each of them arrived, the people were disappointed and complained ...



The Story

Jesus was speaking to the crowd.

'What are you like? You are like children playing wedding and funeral games. You sit and watch and shout to each other, "We played the flute and you did not dance." "We were sad and wept and you did not cry with us."

'John the Baptist came,' Jesus said to them. 'He did not go around eating too much or drinking. And what did people say? They said, "He has a demon in him!"

Then I came along, eating and drinking and what did they say? They said, "That man eats too much! He drinks too much! He is a friend of tax collectors and even sinners!" But God's wisdom is proved by its results.' *Matthew 11:16-19*

Jesus started to pray, 'Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the wise and the clever and revealed them to children. This is what you want. My Father has given me everything. Only he truly knows the Son. And only the Son truly knows the Father. But the Son wants to tell others about the Father too.'

He said to the crowd, 'Come to me, anyone who is tired and carrying a heavy load, and I will give you rest.' Then he looked at the people around him and said, 'Take the yoke I give you and learn from me. I am gentle – my yoke is easy and the load I give you is not too heavy.

You will find rest for your souls.' *Matthew 11:25-30*

demon - also described as an evil spirit; spiritual forces that trouble people – sometimes this might be interpreted as mental illness;

sinners - people who are not living life as God intends;

yoke - a curved piece of wood put across the shoulders of animals or people to help carry heavy or awkward burdens.



Thinking About It

Jesus pointed out to the crowd that when the prophet, John the Baptist, came to prepare the way for Jesus' arrival, he did not eat too much nor drink much. But, instead of listening to what he said, the people complained that he "has a demon in him" because he wasn't like them.

Then Jesus Himself arrived to teach the people about the Kingdom of God. He ate and drank with the people but then they complained "That man eats too much! He drinks too much!".

It sounds like the people did not want to hear what either of the men had to say so looked for fault in them, even though they had done nothing wrong. Sometimes we look too much at the packaging that a gift come in and that affects how we receive the gift, however wonderful it might be.

In the second part, Jesus thanked God for hiding His mysteries from the wise and the clever, instead uncovering them to children and innocents. He then invited anyone with a heavy burden to rest with Him. He can help us with our worries and fears but only if we share them with Him. He offers His yoke and promises that the load that He gives us will not be too heavy.

We all see other people carrying shopping bags, working hard in the garden, washing the car and cooking a meal. Maybe we could offer to help them: carry one of their bags, join them in the garden and learn to prepare food in the kitchen. God has offered to lighten our burden but we can help others by lightening theirs as well.

Activity

Find an empty plastic bottle with a screw lid. Half fill it with water and put the top back on so the water cannot spill out. It might be good if you have an adult with you for this activity.

Is the bottle heavy? Lift it up and feel its weight. Do you need both hands or could you hold it with just one?

How long do you think you could carry the bottle with the water?

Now hold the bottle in just one hand stretched out in front of you. How long can you hold it like that? You must put the bottle down when it starts to hurt.

You could probably carry the bottle in your bag for a long time (possibly all day) but when you hold it out in front of you, it soon feels much heavier, even though nothing has changed.

This is what our worries and fears can feel like. We cannot carry them with us for a long time before they start to hurt. Sometimes we feel we have to carry them with us all the time but why?

Jesus invites us to turn to him when the burdens get too heavy - put down our bottle of water and rest. We can then pick up the bottle and our worries again and continue on our way once that we have rested.



Prayer

Dear God,

When we are lonely or worried, please help us to remember that we can always talk to you and you will always listen.
Amen.

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Puzzle

Look at these two pictures of a donkey carrying a heavy load. Can you spot five differences between the two pictures?

