

FAMILY PAGE: TO BE BLESSED

FAMILY QUESTION: HOW ARE WE BLESSED?

In the kingdom of God, there is enough for everyone! In systems of oppression, people hoard and exclude others. Discuss how your family is blessed and how your family might be affected by oppressive systems. In times of uncertainty, this practice gives grown-ups and guardians the opportunity to assure children that they will have what they need, even if times are hard. There is always more than enough love.

BRIEF REFLECTION

Life was extremely difficult for people who followed Jesus. A small group of wealthy people—people with lots of money, land, and honor—controlled almost everything. Money and land were some of the most powerful things a person could have in Jesus' time. Another important thing was honor. To have honor meant to have people's respect and to belong. This same small group of people made decisions in their government which helped them get more money, land, and honor. Those decisions also made life harder and poorer for others by taking money, land, and honor away from them. This is called an oppressive system.

Jesus began to help people by healing them from all kinds of sickness and telling them about God's kingdom. You can think of a "kingdom" as the way the world works or is set up, normally under a king.

After healing so many people's hurts and pains, Jesus cared for them in another way. He brought them up a mountain and sat down to teach them, bringing healing to their hearts, souls, and minds.

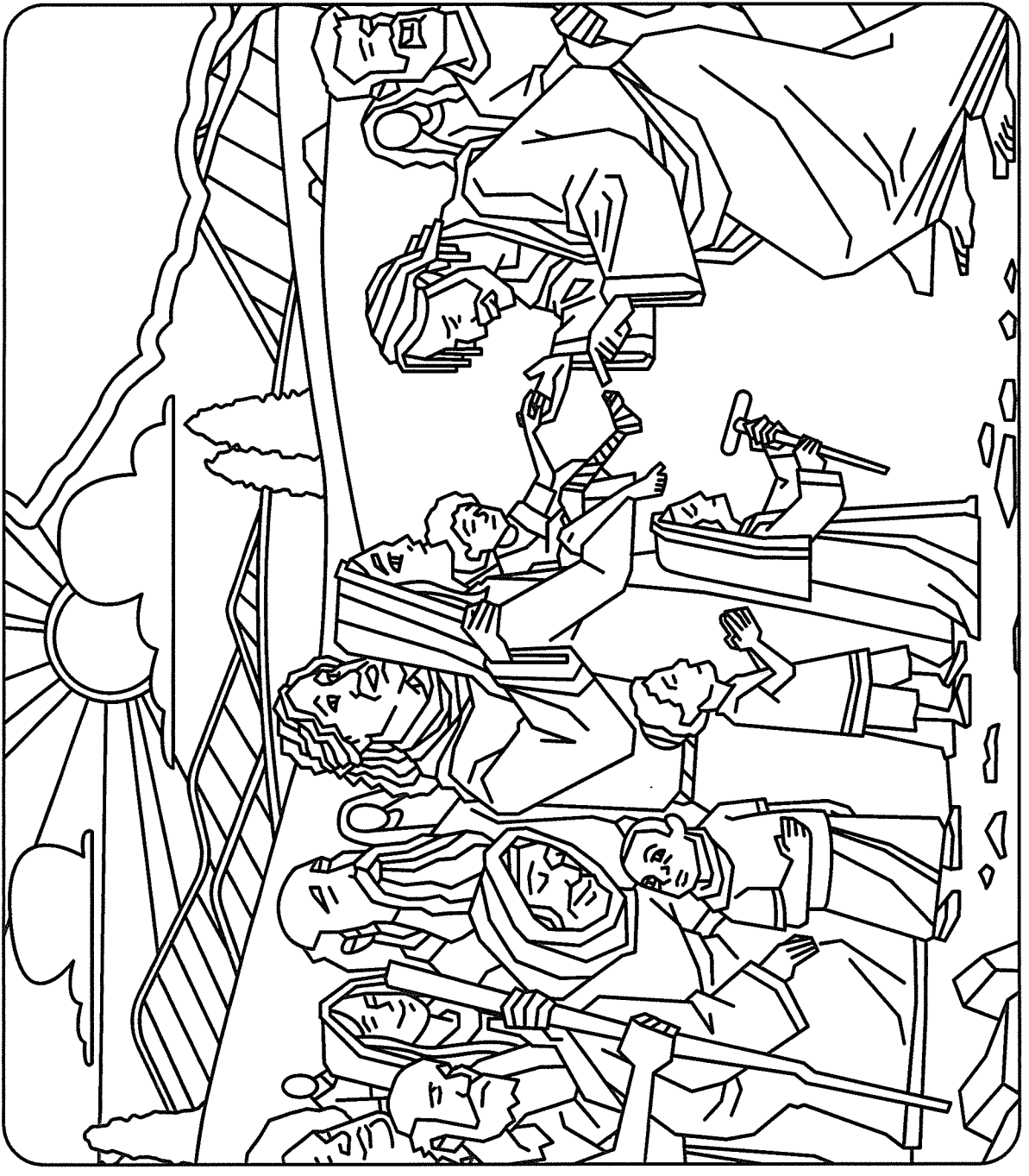
Jesus told the people God wants everyone to have all they need and no one to be harmed or oppressed. In God's kingdom, there is abundance: more than enough food, money, love, and resources for every child of God to thrive. When there's enough for everyone, no one needs to fight or oppress anyone else. Everything Jesus taught and did was about breaking down hurtful, oppressive systems, and building up God's kingdom of abundance instead.

Jesus listed nine ways people are "blessed." To be "blessed" meant to be happy in the fullest. People often thought happiness happened because of their situation or circumstances (or how life was going for them); people still think that today. The kind of people Jesus described as "blessed" or "happy" seemed strange.

Jesus said happy or blessed people are those we might usually think of as unlucky or having lots of trouble. Jesus' topsy-turvy teaching showed them they are loved, they are special, they are not alone. He encouraged them to see this in one another, too. Jesus blessed people through his actions and words. He gave them hope.

PRAYER

Loving God, We praise you for your abundance! Abundant love! Abundant belonging! Abundant hope! Abundant life for every child of yours! Please help us to break down the systems around us which cause harm, and to bring your kingdom to our world today. Amen.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Share a time someone has helped you heal (e.g. put a band-aid on you, got you cleaned up after a fall, received help from a doctor or hospital).

How do you think the people listening to Jesus felt hearing about God's kingdom of abundance?

When have you noticed a situation when someone with more power (authority, respect, or belonging) harms those with less power?