

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?
They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI NIV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 1 Bible Verse and Song: Ephesians 5:1-2

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

*We're learning... Bible Truth 11:
God's People Tell Others about Him*

We've all rebelled against God and deserve His just and eternal punishment for our sins. But God, in His great love for sinners, chose to send His Son, Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus came and lived the perfect life that pleases God. On the cross, He offered it up as the perfect payment for the sins of God's people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had conquered sin and death, once and for all! Now all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior are forgiven and receive eternal life with God. This good news is what Christians call the gospel--and everyone needs to hear it! God calls His people to tell it to everyone, in every part of the world. Jesus promises to come back after the gospel has been taken to every people on earth, all according to God's good plan.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 11 Bible Verse: Romans 10:13-15, ESV

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

CASE STORY

Acts 13:1-12

Our story is called:

The Case of the Homecoming Heralds.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who were the homecoming heralds? Who went with them?
2. What did they come home to do?

This story takes place in New Testament times, after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead.

"Home, at last!" Barnabas and his cousin, John Mark, must have thought as the white beaches of Cyprus came into view. In the distance, they could see the familiar, green plains and majestic, snow-capped mountains of Cyprus that had once been their home. How beautiful! It has been years since they had seen these lovely sights! How good it was to see them again!

But Barnabas and John Mark hadn't come to Cyprus just to see their beautiful country or even to catch up with family, as nice as that might have been. They had come to Cyprus on a mission, together with Paul. A mission placed upon them by God. Paul and Barnabas were to preach the good news of Jesus to the people of Cyprus for the first time. John Mark had come as their helper.

One day, as the leaders of the church in Antioch were worshipping the Lord and fast, the Lord spoke to them. "Set apart Barnabas and Paul for Me, for the work I am calling them to," the Holy Spirit told them. "I am sending them out from you to tell others about Jesus who have not yet heard."

The elders laid hands upon Barnabas and Paul and asked God to bless the mission. then, the three men set off. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the three walked west to Seleucia, the big, Roman, naval seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. From there, they set sail on a cargo ship for Cyprus. And now, after 100 miles of sea-tossed travel, their ship had docked at Salamis, Cyprus.

It didn't take long to see why the Lord had sent them to Cyprus. Oh yes, the people were worshippers, but not of the Lord! It seemed that none had heard the good news of salvation through Jesus! The Greeks worshiped Zeus and Aphrodite. And Jews worshiped the Lord. They tried to keep God's laws. They gathered in the synagogues to hear preaching from the Bible. They knew the prophets' promises of a coming Savior, but they didn't that Savior

was Jesus and they didn't know that He had come! But now both Greeks and Jew would hear. So, beginning in Salamis, the three men went to the synagogues of Cyprus, preaching the good news of Jesus to all who would listen.

"Jews and Greeks who seek after God, listen to me," Paul would say. "God has brought the Savior Jesus, as he promised he would. All who confess their sins, turn from them, and believe in Him will be forgiven! Don't live separated from God anymore! Come and make peace with Him, once and for all!" They urged everyone.

On and on the three men walked. Over mountains, through forests and fields, along beaches, they traveled with the message of Jesus. . Through Tremithus, Citium, Amathus, Curium, and Palaipaphos—all the major cities of Cyprus—they went until they reached Paphos, more than a hundred miles away at the other end of the island.

Paphos was the most important city in Cyprus. The Romans designed and built it to be the island's new modern capital. It had a port where big, Roman ships could easily anchor. It had luxurious villas for the most important Roman leaders to live in. There were temples built for their gods, and a giant, outdoor theater that could hold hundreds of people. Most of all, Paphos was home to the most powerful man in Cyprus: Sergius Paulus, The Roman proconsul (governor).

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark wasted no time in sharing the good news of Jesus with the people of this important city. Before long though, news of three men and their new teachings reached the proconsul.

"Find these men and bring them to me!" Sergius Paulus ordered his men. "I want to hear for myself these new things they are preaching."

Paul, Barnabas and John Mark were found and brought before the proconsul. "Sergius Paulus, your honor, listen to us," they told him. "God has sent the Savior Jesus, as he promised in the Bible. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of God's people and then rose from the dead in victory. All who repent of their sins and trust in him as their Savior can be saved. You, too, can make peace with God and know eternal life."

Many Greeks and Romans had laughed when they heard the good news of Jesus, but not this man. Sergius Paulus listened carefully and was eager to hear more!

"How wonderful!" thought Paul, Barnabas and John Mark. "Could it be that the Holy Spirit was working in his heart?"

Could it be that the Lord would bring the very proconsul of Cyprus to be saved? What a great testimony to the Lord he might to many Romans and Greeks!!

But Satan, too, was aware of how greatly Jesus might be glorified through Sergius Paulus; and, he had his own plans to block the work of God in this man's heart, if possible. Right there, in Sergius Paulus' palace, was a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Elymas Bar-Jesus. He had giving Sergius Paulus spiritual advice based on his evil powers. As soon as he saw his master's growing interest in the good news of Jesus, Elymas began to argue against Paul, Barnabas and John Mark. He tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

But Satan can never stand up against the mighty power of God and His perfect plans. Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, turned and looked straight at Elymas. He said, "You are from the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You're full of tricks and lies. Will you never working against the Lord? Now He will be against you! You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately Elymas lost his sight. He felt his way around the room, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Sergius Paulus watched what happened in amazement of God's power. This Jesus must be who Paul and Barnabas said he was, the proconsul decided.

Right there and then, he repented of his sins and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. How Paul, Barnabas and John Mark praised God! Their mission here was complete!

The three men headed down to the docks at Paphos. John Mark headed back to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas set sail for the city of Perga, 150 miles across the sea in Turkey. Watching the coast of Cyprus fade out of view, the men had much to praise God for. He was raising up His people in Cyprus! He would use these new believers to keep on sharing the good news of Jesus with others, while He sent Barnabas and Paul to new lands so that yet more might hear about Jesus for the first time.

Our Bible Truth is:

God's People Tell Others about Him.

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 10:13-15

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"

Paul and Barnabas had been especially called by the Holy Spirit to leave their home church in Antioch and go share the good news of Jesus with people who had never heard. Theirs were the "beautiful feet" that brought good news to the island of Cyprus and many other places for the first time.

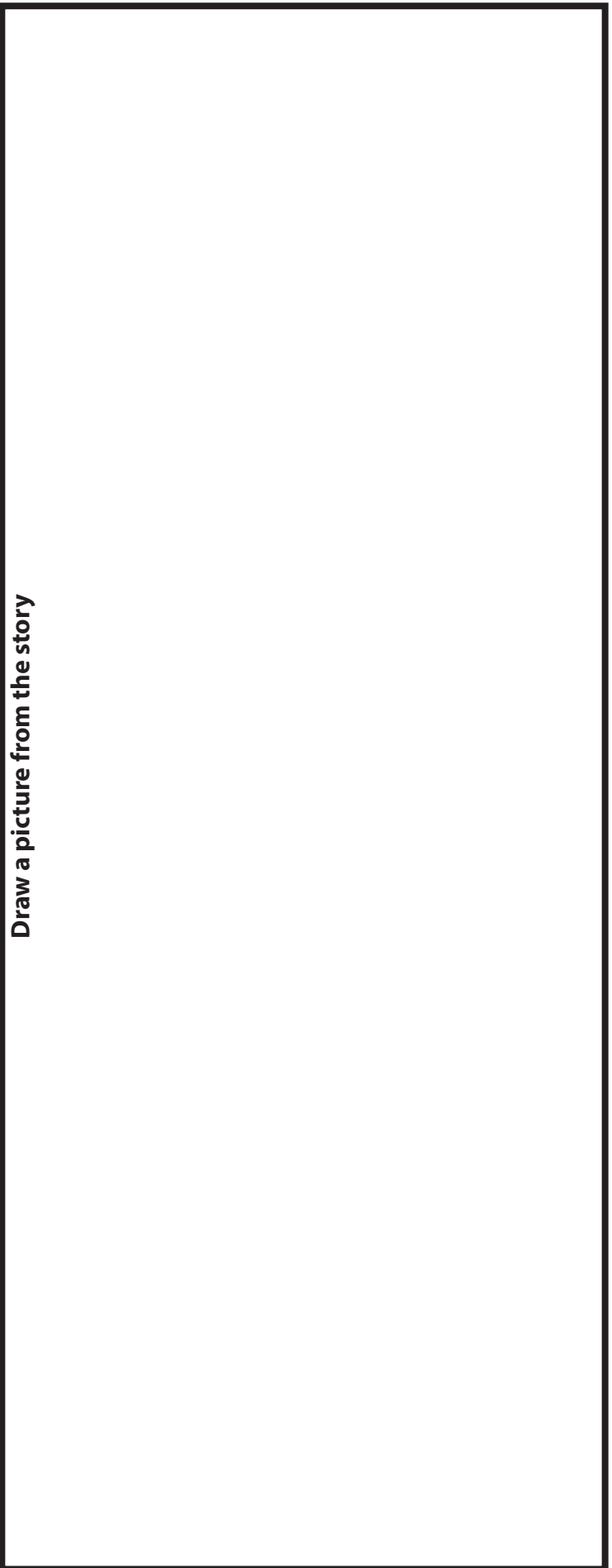
But did you know that even today, almost two thousand years ago, there are still billions of people who have never even heard of Jesus?

And as long as there are people who have not heard, the Holy Spirit will be calling God's people to leave their home churches and be the "beautiful feet" that bring tell them, just like He called Paul and Barnabas to.

Perhaps some of you have never heard the good news of salvation through Jesus before today. How does God want us to respond to it that we might be forgiven our sins? He wants us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. When we do, He forgives our sins, He fills our heart with His Holy Spirit and makes us one of God's dearly loved people. And then we will get to know Him, love Him, serve Him and enjoy Him here on earth our whole lives. And get to live forever with Him in heaven. That's why the gospel is such good news!

Let's praise God for wanting all the people of the earth to know about Him, that they might turn to Him and be saved. Let's ask God to move in the hearts of His people to send them out to even the ends of the earth, until all have heard the good news of Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, helping us to turn away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

All people have rebelled against God and deserve His just punishment for their sins.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who were the homecoming heralds?

Answer: Barnabas and John Mark.

b. Who went with them?

Answer: Paul.

c. What did they come home to do?

Answer: They went home to tell the people of Cyprus the good news of Jesus that they might believe and be saved.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 10:13-15

" ___ who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not ___ in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring ___ news!'"

Answers: everyone; believed; good.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Sender of Your people to others so that they can hear and believe the gospel and be saved.

C God, we confess that, like the people of Cyprus, we are sinners who need to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

T God, we thank You that You sent Jesus to willingly suffer and die to save sinners like us.

S God, we ask that You to work in our hearts. Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send out Your people to all parts of the world that everyone might hear the gospel. Work in the hearts of those who hear the gospel, giving them the gift of faith that they might turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 31

Verse 1

Come ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, love, and pow'r.

Refrain:

I will arise and go to Jesus,
He will embrace me in His arms.
In the arms of my dear Savior,
O there are ten thousand charms.

Words: Joseph Hart Music: Walker's Southern Harmony

"All people suffer the effects of their sinful rebellion against God. Everyone is poor and in need of a Savior. Everyone is weak and weary, sick and sore from sin. God, in His great mercy, chose to send Jesus to save sinners. Yes, Jesus paid for the sins of all who would ever turn and trust in Him. He welcomes them tenderly to come to Him and know the ten thousand charms of His love. If we do this, He will welcome us as our dear Savior, too."

BIBLE VERSE SONG

How Beautiful

PFI NIV Songs 12, Track 32

Refrain

How beautiful! How beautiful!
How beautiful are the feet.
How beautiful! How beautiful!
Are the feet of those who preach the good news.
Ev'ryone who calls on the name of the Lord,
Will be saved.
Ev'ryone who calls on the name of the Lord,
Will be saved.

Yes, but I have some questions....

How then will they call on Him they've not believed in?
How are they to believe in Him they never heard?
How are they to hear without someone preaching?
How are they to preach unless they are sent?

Well, it all goes back to those feet! Refrain

Romans Ten, thirteen through fifteen.

Words: Romans 10:13-15, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011

This verse reminds us that God has chosen for others to hear the good news of salvation by sending His people to tell others about Him. They must go, if others are to hear. The feet of people who go tell others about Jesus are beautiful, not because they have pretty toes and ankles. This is a way of saying that people who are willing to go and tell others about Jesus bring wonderful news of eternal life to those who would otherwise have no hope of salvation.