

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 NIV 1984

"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good. His love endures forever."

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

God Loves His People by Caring for Their Needs

God is the most wonderful Father anyone could ever imagine. He is always good; always wise. He loves His children with the deepest of loves. He always takes care of their needs. When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as Savior, God becomes our heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

God's people know that God has already taken care of their greatest need of all: He sent Jesus to die for their sins. When they remember that their loving Father was willing to give up even His own dear Son to save them, they know they can trust Him to take care all the rest of their needs, too.

God delights to hear His people ask Him for what they need; and, He delights to provide them with what they need. He always gives them what He knows is the very best for them.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 23:1-6

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the day of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Penniless, Rich Man.

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

1. Who was the Penniless, Rich Man? How did he choose to be penniless? Why?
2. Who made him rich? How?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out in 1837 in Barnsley, England.

James Taylor sat in his library, reading one of Captain Hall's books about China. How amazing it was! It had huge mountains and massive deserts. It had rich soil and wide rivers that flowed through the land and out into the China Sea. The people wove beautiful, shiny fabric woven worm's silk; and, held colorful holiday parades with flower-covered floats and giant, 100-foot-long dragon puppets that swerved and darted.

But it was what the Chinese worshiped that James was most interested in. Most Chinese people had not seen a Bible or heard of Jesus. In huge temples with tall, pointy roofs in their cities and little worship altars in their homes, they worshiped idols and dead family members who lived before them. They bowed before them before with slender, red, sweet-smelling incense candles in their hands. Sometimes they brought offerings of fruit, pigs and ducks. Sometimes they burned special money called "Hell Bank Notes" that they believed their dead relatives could use in the spirit world. The Chinese treated their gods well, believing that they helped them against evil spirits.

Now James loved the Lord Jesus and knew that only through believing in Him that could anyone be saved from their sins. He wanted someone to go and tell the Chinese people about Jesus. James knew that God had called him to live in Barnsley to work as a chemist and as a pastor, so he prayed for God to send someone else: "Lord, give us a son to go China and tell them the good news of Jesus," James prayed.

Life in China was hard. Only a strong, healthy man could survive there. It would take a great trust in God to take care of his needs. The few missionaries who had already gone to tell the Chinese about Jesus had been hurt or even killed. This was a big prayer that James prayed, but he believed God could answer it.

Two years later, James' wife Amelia gave birth to a little boy, naming him Hudson. Would this be the one to go to China some day? They hoped so.

Hudson grew up quickly. He loved to explore the country around Barnsley and listening to his father read about faraway places. He and his sister especially loved "Peter Parley's Tales of China." They promised each other that they would visit China one day.

You would think that Hudson's parents would have rejoiced at Hudson's love of China. Wasn't this the answer to their prayers? But Hudson's parents didn't rejoice. They had even given up praying this prayer for Hudson. Why? Because Hudson was a sickly child. He was so weak that he couldn't even go to school. If there was one thing that was clear to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, it was that Hudson would never to China.

But that's where Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were wrong. Their faith was too small. The Lord was the God who loved His people and who could meet all their needs. Without the Lord, Hudson might just be weak and sickly. But with Him, Hudson could do whatever God wanted him to do...even go to China. So God answered Mr. and Mrs. Taylor's prayers, even though they had stopped praying them.

When Hudson was about fifteen years old, the Holy Spirit began to work in his heart, helping him repent of his sins and trust Jesus as His Savior, then stirring his heart to go to China to tell about Jesus.

"You are too weak to go to China," people told him. But Hudson didn't listen. He remembered God's promise to never leave His people. He trusted that the mighty God who called him to go would provide all he needed. Because of Him, Hudson knew that anything—even China-- was possible.

Hudson began to prepare for serving God in China. He exercised outside a lot to strengthen his body. He slept on a hard mat on the floor. He prayed and studied the Bible, especially the Chinese New Testament. He studied to be a doctor and worked among the poorest people in town, healing them and telling them the good news of Jesus.

Hudson also practiced depending upon God to meet all his needs. "When I go to China, God will often be the only one to take care of me. Before I leave for England, I want to learn to ask God to meet my needs so I will be ready," he thought. He began to ask God directly for help, when he would have asked others--not because it's bad to ask

others for help, but so he would be ready for life in China. Every time, Hudson prayed God met his needs, often in amazing ways.

At last it was time for Hudson to go to China. He boarded a ship for China. Six weeks later he arrived in Shanghai. Hudson was overwhelmed. What a big city! How different everyone looked! He could not understand anything they were saying. And he was all alone. All he had was the names of three people who might help him...if he could find them.

"Knock! Knock! Knock!" Hudson banged on the door where the first person was supposed to live. The door opened, but it was not the person he hoped to find. "The man you are looking for died at sea just weeks ago and I can't help you," Hudson was told.

"Knock! Knock! Knock!" Hudson banged on the door where the second person was supposed to live. The door opened, but once again, it wasn't the person he hoped to find. "The man you're looking for moved to America and I can't help you," Hudson was told.

Only the third letter was left. Hudson had little hope that this last man would help him, but he didn't worry. He knew just what to do. It might look like he was all alone, but he was not. He would pray to God and trust Him to meet his needs. And as you can probably guess, the Lord did meet Hudson's need, that very day.

The man named in the last letter led Hudson to some missionaries who gave him food to eat and a room to stay in. And before long, Hudson was out in the streets with the missionaries helping them tell the Chinese people about Jesus. Hudson praised God. Already on his very first days in China, Hudson had relied on God alone to take care of his needs and God had proven how trustworthy He was!

Those first days in China were only the first of many years in which Hudson needed to trust in God alone to meet his needs. During a terrible war in the city of Shanghai, he had to dodge cannonballs and his house was blown up. As he traveled out in the countryside, he faced angry Chinese who wanted to kill him for telling them to turn from worshiping their gods and dead family members and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Many times he didn't know where his next meal would come from. One time, the man he paid to help him even ran off with his bedding and all his money.

No friends. No family. Time after time, Hudson was left

all on his own. But what did Hudson do each time? He didn't worry. He knew just what to do. It might look like he was all alone, but he was not. He would pray to God and trust Him to meet his needs. And so the Lord did--every single time!

Hudson Taylor spent all but six of the next fifty years of his life in China telling the people the good news of Jesus. By the time he died in 1905, he had translated the New Testament into Ningpo Chinese and had helped set up 205 missionary stations with hundreds of missionaries and Chinese Christians working together to tell more Chinese the good news of Jesus. Hundreds gathered together at his funeral on June 3rd in Changsha, China. They loved Hudson and were sad to see him go; yet, that was not all. Mixed in with the sadness there was much rejoicing in Hudson's great God, who had always been faithful to meet his needs. Yes, the Lord had indeed never forsaken him, all the years of his life. And now, the Lord had taken Hudson home to be with Him in heaven where there would be pleasures in His presence forevermore. This would be best of all!

Our Bible Truth is:

God Loves His People By Caring For Their Needs

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 23:1-6:

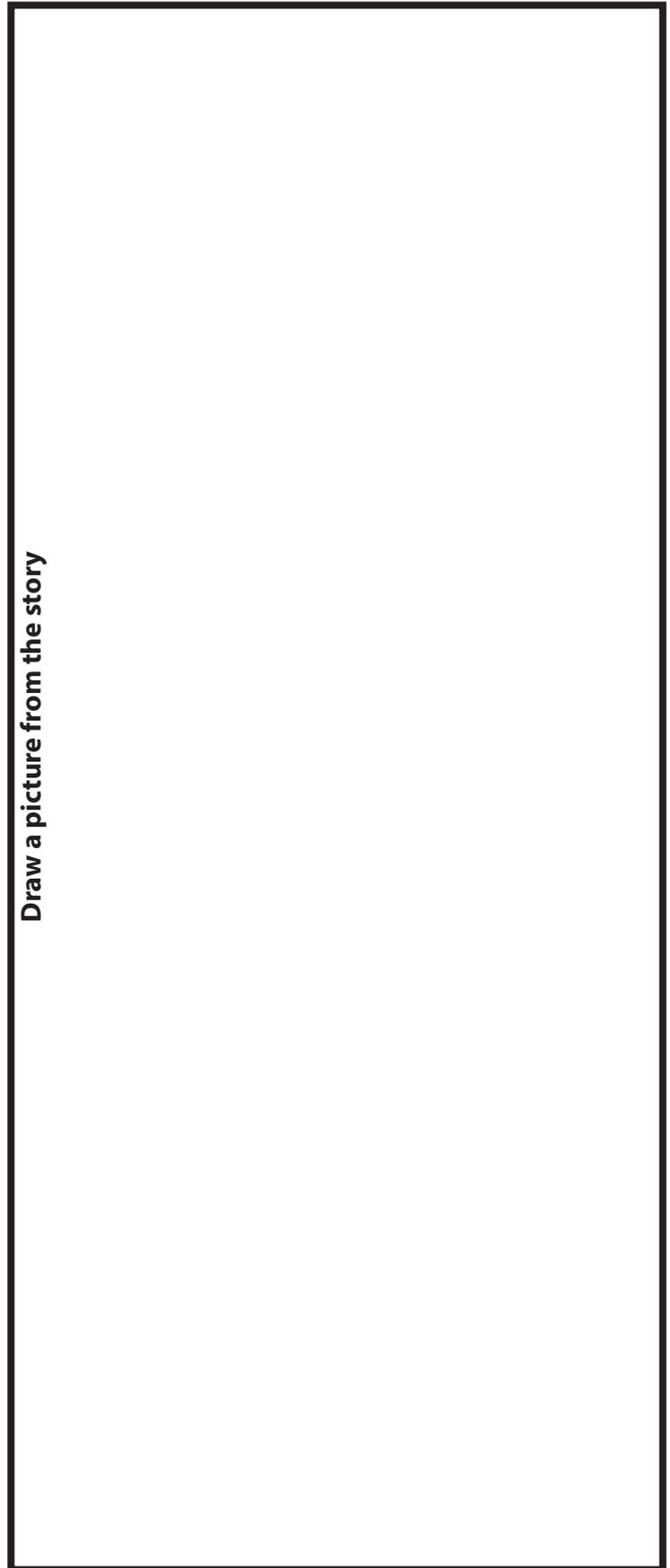
"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the day of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

No matter how impossible Hudson Taylor's situation seemed, he chose not to worry, but to trust God to take care of his needs. God never, ever failed him. What a great God is the Lord!

What about you and me? Can we trust God to take care of our needs like He took care of Hudson Taylor's? Yes, we can! If we turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior, then we will be God's dearly loved people, too. Like Hudson Taylor, we will have nothing to worry about--ever! We know that God will never forsake us or fail us. He will always meet our needs in the way He knows is best.

Let's praise God for His promises to always take care of

people's needs. Let's take our needs to God. Let's ask Him to help us to trust Him as our Savior and make us His people. Let's thank Him for all the ways He has met our needs already.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God gets annoyed when His people keep asking for Him to take care of their needs.
 Answer: False! God always delights to hear His people's prayers and to answer them. He loves to take care of His people!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who were the two needy men? Who did they rely upon to get what they needed?
 Answer: Nero and Peter. Nero relied upon himself. Peter relied upon Jesus.

b. Who looked like he had all his needs met? Who truly had all his needs met? Why?
 Answer: Nero seemed to get everything he wanted. But only Peter truly had all his needs met. Jesus gave him everything he needed to live the life God wanted him to live. And, Jesus also gave Peter forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Sadly, Nero never did.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
Psalm 23:1-6
 "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green ____, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His ____ sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they ____ me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD ____."
 Answers: pastures; name's; comfort; forever.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love
PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 12,13

Verse 1
 The King of love my shepherd is,
 Whose goodness faileth never.
 I nothing lack if I am His
 and He is mine forever.

Verse 4
 In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
 With Thee dear Lord beside me.
 Thy rod and staff, my comfort still,
 Thy cross before to guide me.

Words: Henry Baker, Psalm 23 Music: Traditional Irish Melody

God's people praise God for being the King of love. He is their king who they obey. It is delightful having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them and for the glory of His name. He takes care of them like a good shepherd does his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God does this for His people. They lack nothing; His goodness never fails them; even when facing death, they still fear nothing "ill" because He is with them. God's people know God will care for them after death by taking them to heaven to be with Him forever. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Provider of all Your people's needs.

C God, we confess that while we know the good news of Jesus and we know Your promises to care for Your people, that many times we choose to not trust that You will take care of us. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being able to provide for the needs of Your people, even when they cannot see how You will do it.

S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Give us hearts that trust You with our whole lives and hearts that desire to tell others about Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Is My Shepherd
PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 14

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul,
 He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
 Even though I walk through the valley of death,
 I will fear no evil, For You are with me,
 Your rod and Your staff they comfort me,
 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me,
 All of the days of my life,
 And I will dwell in the house of the LORD,
 Forever and ever and ever.
 Psalm Twenty-three. verses one through four, and six.

Words adapted from Psalm 23:1-4,6 Constance Dever © 2011

These verses remind us that God loves His people and cares for their needs completely, just like a good shepherd loves and takes care of his sheep.