



**Unit 11 Prontos--NIV
The God Who Saves**



Curriculum for preschool and elementary age children,
training tools, music and other resources
are available for download or to order at:
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The PFI Companion Resources

While all the PFI resources are available for download at praisefactory.org, many of the resources are available for purchase as hard copies, too.

There are three companion resources for each of the sixteen PFI units:

PFI Core Curriculum Book (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Core Curriculum book contains the curriculum introduction, the lesson plans, stories and the activities for each Bible Truth in a unit. There are three stories and resources per Bible Truth: an Old Testament, New Testament and church history/missions story. All three reinforce the key Bible truth concept.

PFI Song Book (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Unit Song Book provides lead sheets and sign language for every song used in the unit. The audio music is available online for download.

➔ PFI Prontos (ESV/NIV) --offered for each unit

The PFI Prontos book provides all of the unit's take home sheets. They are offered separately from the rest of the curriculum because they are usually photo-copied. These take-home sheets include the key concepts, lyrics to the songs, the session story, some review questions, a prayer and an activity sheet.

All of these materials may be photocopied for non-commercial church, classroom or school use by licensed users.

About the PFI Prontos

The PFI Prontos are the take-home devotionals for each session of PFI.

They include the Bible Truth, its related Bible verse, the lyrics and meaning blurb for the hymn and Bible verse song, three quiz questions, a prayer and two activity sheets for every story in the curriculum.

While the Prontos are designed as a reinforcement tool for parents to use with their children after session, the resources are so substantial as to be used as a curriculum by themselves. Additional activities can be downloaded online with each Bible truth.

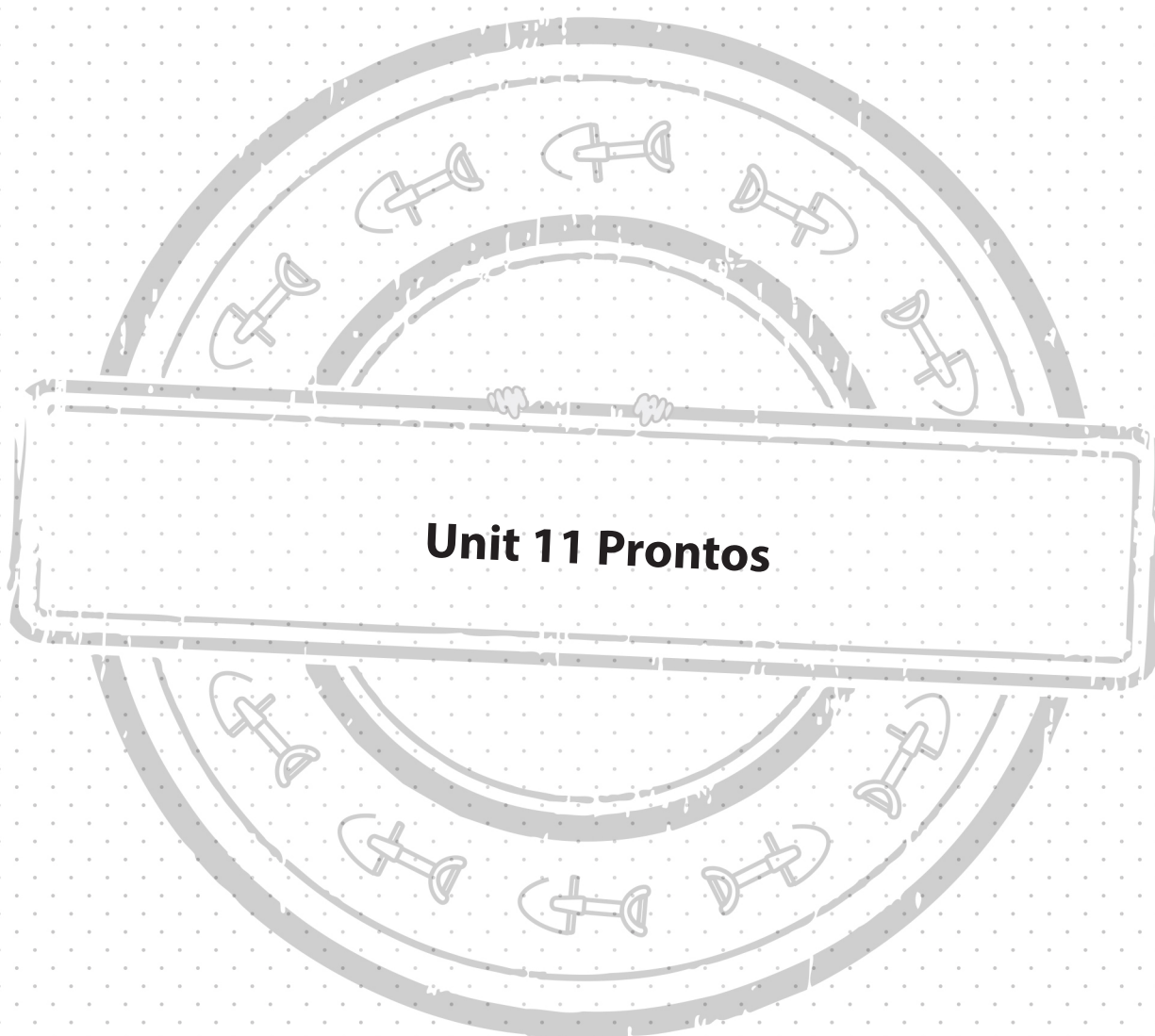
Other Praise Factory Resources

PFI: Praise Factory Investigators is the third in a family of three, inter-related curriculums:

- Hide 'n' Seek Kids (focus group: ages 2-4; adaptable range: ages 2-pre-K 5's)
- Deep Down Detectives (focus group: ages 4--6's; adaptable range: ages 3-2nd grade)
- PFI: (focus group: grades K-5th grade; adaptable range: pre-K 5's-6th grade)

Each curriculum teaches the same biblical themes, but are presented in greater depth as the children grow and develop. Together, the curriculums work like an expanding spiral of truth that returns to reinforce the same truths with each curriculum, yet leading the children to deeper understanding with each step up.

Learn more about these curriculums as well as other resources and ideas for reaching children with the gospel at: www.praisefactory.org.



Unit 11 Prontos

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

God is perfectly holy. There is no sin in Him at all. He is too holy for sin to even live in His presence. How gloriously magnificent and pure is He!

But we are all sinners. We have all chosen to rebel against God and His good ways. Not only can we not live in His presence because of our sinfulness, but we deserve to be shut out of His presence forever because of it. And there's nothing sinful people like us can do on our own to make ourselves acceptable to God.

We would be without hope, except for God's amazing grace and mercy! He, Himself, has done what was needed. He sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and offer it up as the perfect payment for the sins of His people when He suffered and died on the cross. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing He had beat sin and death. Yes, He had fully paid for the sins of God's people. He has made salvation a gift.

How can we receive this wonderful gift? God offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who confess their sins to Him and trust in Jesus as their Savior. When we do this, turning away from living life our own way and living for God instead, He will give us this gift! He will make us His people forever!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: 1 John 1:8-9, NIV 1984

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

CASE STORY

Luke 15

Our story is called:

The Case of the Ridiculous Runner.

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

1. Who was the Ridiculous Runner? Who thought his running was ridiculous? (Ridiculous means something silly that you wouldn't expect them to do).
2. Why did he run even though it was thought ridiculous? Who did he run to? What does the Ridiculous Runner tell us about God?

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

Some men walked together down the street. It was easy to tell: these were important people! What proud long beards, what beautiful robes, and what showy prayer shawls with long tassles they had! Yes, they were important people. They were Pharisees and teachers of God's law. And in Israel, there was hardly anyone more important than them.

As these men walked along, they noticed a crowd of people who were just the opposite of them: very unimportant people. They were what many would call big sinners. Terrible people, like greedy tax collectors. The Pharisees were disgusted by this swarm of disgusting people, but they were also curious as to know why they had gathered together.

Soon they had their answer: Jesus! Oooh! That frustrating new rabbi (teacher of God's law)! They hated how Jesus cared for sinners! He welcomed them. He even ate with them, as if they were friends! "Why does a good teacher like Jesus spend time with sinner?!" the Pharisees grumbled. "Doesn't He know He makes himself unclean before God when He does that?" they exclaimed.

But it was what Jesus taught those sinners that made them even angrier. "It's not the well who need a physician but the sick. The Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost. Whoever comes to me I will never turn away," Jesus told these people. Jesus was inviting these sinners to come to God!

"These people are so sinful that they aren't even allowed in the synagogues or the Temple," the Pharisees exclaimed. "They have broken God's laws on purpose. Jesus knows the law offers no sacrifice for people who do that," the Pharisees complained. "Who does Jesus think He is, to give these sinners the hope of forgiveness! Only

God can do that!"

But Jesus knew the Pharisees had something wrong. No one could ever keep God's laws well enough to please God. All people were sinners who deserved God's punishment! All needed to turn away from their sins and confess them to God. All needed a Savior to forgive them of their sins. There were no exceptions! These Pharisees need to hear this message just as much as the tax collectors, though they didn't know it. So Jesus began to tell a story that would make this clear.

"There once was a good Jewish father who had two sons," Jesus began. "The older son was obedient and -the Pharisees as much as these people they called sinners. hardworking for his father as a son should be; but, the younger son was not. He did not want to stay home and did not want to keep his father's rules and way of living. So he went to his father and said, "Father, when you die a part of all your things will be mine. I don't want to wait until then. Give me my share now!"

"What a wicked son! What a sinner he is!" the Pharisees were probably thinking. "Asking for any of your father's things while he's still alive is like saying to him 'I wish you were dead. Give me your money!' That was even worst than what the tax collectors did!"

Jesus continued, "Even though it was terrible of the son to ask his father his share of the property, the father decided to give it to him anyway. The son took all his father had given him and sold it for cash. He took the money, packed his things and left home for a faraway Gentile country where he spent all his money living and wild life doing whatever pleased him."

What a sinner this younger son was! Everyone listening to Jesus' story could see that! Disgracing his father and brother! Taking all of his father's hard-earned money and spending on a bunch of Gentiles!

Everyone in that crowd knew that the younger son deserved to be cut off from his family and never allowed to return. Perhaps that had even happened to sinners gathered right there at Jesus' feet. Hadn't they embarrassed their families by their big sins?

Jesus went on with the story: "Life got worse for the young man when his money ran out. A bad famine—no rain for a long time—hit the land. Crops and animals died. Everyone was just barely getting by. No one needed extra help or had extra food to share. Finally the young man

became so desperate that he got a job feeding the pigs of a Gentile (non-Jewish) farmer!

Feeding pigs for a Gentile farmer might not sound so bad to us, but it was a terrible thing to the Jews listening to Jesus' story. Jews weren't supposed to have anything to do with Gentiles, let alone work for them. They weren't supposed to eat or even touch pigs. Many even believed that a person who raises pigs is cursed by God! "This son is really in trouble with God now!" the listening crowd would have thought.

Jesus went on. "The young man fed the pigs, but even the pigs got more food than he did. He was so hungry he would have even eaten the pigs' dry pods, but nobody even offered those to him.

At last the son began to think: "What a sinner I am! What have I done?! Taken my father's things, runaway from home, spent all his hard-earned money doing all sorts of wicked things! Now look at me: working on a pig farm with not even enough food to keep me from starving. Life is far better than this for my father's workers. He gives them good work and gives them so much food that they have leftovers. I have disgraced my father. I could never be his son again, I know that, But, perhaps if I confess my sin against him and God, he will take me as one of his servants.' So the young man left the pig farm and started the long trip back home."

Everyone was curious to hear what Jesus would say next. This son had sinned terribly against both God and his father! How could he think that either one of them would forgive him after all he's done?! The Pharisees knew that by the law (Deuteronomy 21), that father even had the right to stone his son to death for such rebellious behavior! Asking to be a servant was even too good for him! But what would the father in Jesus' story do? They all waited and listened.

"As the son walked along, he thought about what he would say when he got home: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be your son. Make me like one of your servants....'"

But to the son's surprise, he didn't have to go home to find his father. His father was coming to him! He had spotted his son coming down the road from a long way off and now he was running straight towards him at full speed--something older men just didn't do! This was shocking and embarrassing!

Why was the father running anyway? No one would

have been surprised if Jesus said that the father started yelling at his son to go away and never come back; or even, starting throwing at his son. This was what this son deserved, everyone would have thought. Perhaps some of the sinners listening to Jesus right then knew what this was like. Perhaps this had even happened to them. After all, they had acted shamefully, too.

But the father in Jesus' story didn't do these things. "The father ran until he reached his son," Jesus told the crowd. "He threw his arms around him and kissed him."

Such love the son never expected and knew he didn't deserve! He started his speech: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son....'

But he never got to finish. His father had already forgiven him! This was his son, returned to him! The father was overjoyed! He turned to his servants and said, "Go quickly and bring the best robe in the house...my robe...and put it on my son. Get the family ring and place it on his finger. He will not be some barefooted servant! This is my son. Bring sandals for his feet!" Bring the fattened calf we were saving for a special celebration and prepare it," he ordered them. "We are having a feast to celebrate. I thought my son was lost and dead forever. But he's been found and he's alive! And they began to celebrate.

When the older son came home, his father invited him to celebrate the return of his little brother, but he refused, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has wasted your money on big parties with sinners comes home, you kill the fattened calf—the best food we have—to celebrate with him!"

"My son," the father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

The crowd was shocked with the ending to Jesus' story. This was not at all the way it was supposed to be. A wicked, younger son forgiven and welcomed back into the family! The older son asked to celebrate!! How could this be?

Yet that was exactly what Jesus wanted them all to see: God is like the father in the story and those listening to his story are like the two sons. Some might be rebellious, law-breakers, like the younger son. Others were proud,

law-keepers, like the older son. God wants them all to come to Him, confess their sins and be saved. He wants His people to celebrate every sinner who turns away from his sins and trusts in Jesus as their Savior.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 1:8-9:

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Who are we like? Are we like the tax collectors and other sinners, who know their sins and are afraid they are too bad to receive God's forgiveness? Then what good news Jesus' story is! All who come to Him, confessing their sins, turning from them and trusting in Jesus as their Savior, will be saved! No one has been too bad for God to forgive, if they will but turn to Him!

Or are we like the Pharisees? Are we proud about how good we are and look down on others who seem to be bigger sinners than us? We should ask God to work in our proud, hard hearts and help us to confess our sins, turn from them and trust Jesus as our Savior, too. For whether we are the worst of sinners or think we are the best law keepers, we all are sinners who need a Savior!

Let's praise God for being so merciful to sinners. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, that we might see and confess our sins to Him. And, that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God is perfectly holy. He is too holy for sin to even live in His presence.
 Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Ridiculous Runner? Who thought his running was ridiculous? (Ridiculous means something silly that you wouldn't expect them to do).
 Answer: The father of the two young men in Jesus' story. Everyone in Jesus' time would think it ridiculous for an honored old man to run. The teachers of the law especially would have looked down on this man for running.

b. Why did he run even though it was thought ridiculous? Who did he run to? What does the Ridiculous Runner tell us about God?
 Answer: He ran because his son was returning home to him when he thought he would never see him again. He was so happy to see him! He ran to his son. That God rejoices over sinners who come to Him, confessing their sins. He loves them and welcomes them into His family.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
1 John 1:8-9
 "If we ___ to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the ___ is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is ___ and just and will forgive us our sins and ___ us from all unrighteousness."
 Answers: claim; truth; faithful; purify.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Beneath the Cross of Jesus
PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 6

Verse 2
 Upon that cross of Jesus
 Mine eye at times can see
 The very dying form of One
 Who suffered there for me;
 And from my smitten heart with tears
 Two wonders I confess,
 The wonders of His glorious love
 And my unworthiness.

Words: Elizabeth C. Celphane Music: Frederick C. Maker

God's people love to think about what God has done to save them. He loved them so much that He chose to send Jesus, His One and Only Son to suffer and die for their sins on the cross. They are saved because He died in their place! Their hearts are smitten with--that is, overwhelmed-- the greatness of His love for them, such undeserving sinners.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being so merciful to sinful people. We praise You for being the Savior of Your people.

C God, we confess that we are all sinners who deserve God's punishment. We all need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that Your forgiveness is so great that even the worst of sinners can be forgiven by You.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If We Claim
PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 7

If we claim to be without sin,
 If we claim to be without sin,
 If we claim to be without sin,
 We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But, if we confess our sins...

God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 Faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 Faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 And purify us from all unrighteousness.
 First John One, verses eight and nine.

Words: 1 John 1:8-9, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

These verses remind us that we are all sinners. We deceive ourselves if we think we are not. But, the good news is, that if we admit we are sinners and confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and save us through Jesus.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

God is perfectly holy. There is no sin in Him at all. He is too holy for sin to even live in His presence. How gloriously magnificent and pure is He!

But we are all sinners. We have all chosen to rebel against God and His good ways. Not only can we not live in His presence because of our sinfulness, but we deserve to be shut out of His presence forever because of it. And there's nothing sinful people like us can do on our own to make ourselves acceptable to God.

We would be without hope, except for God's amazing grace and mercy! He, Himself, has done what was needed. He sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and offer it up as the perfect payment for the sins of His people when He suffered and died on the cross. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing He had beat sin and death. Yes, He had fully paid for the sins of God's people. He has made salvation a gift.

How can we receive this wonderful gift? God offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who confess their sins to Him and trust in Jesus as their Savior. When we do this, turning away from living life our own way and living for God instead, He will give us this gift! He will make us His people forever!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: 1 John 1:8-9, NIV 1984

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Mountains of Death and Life.

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

1. Why were the mountains called the Mountains of Death?
2. Who went to those mountains to bring life? How did they do that?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out around 1909 in England.

Far away in Southeast India lie mountain ranges called Kolloi Malai. Many tribes of people have made their home in tiny villages on these hot, jungly mountains, but few outsiders dare visit. Why? If you knew what Kolloi Malai meant in English you would understand. Kolloi Malai means "Mountains of Death!"

The people called them the Mountains of Death because of the sicknesses the mountains held. There was malaria, typhoid, bubonic plague, and special deadly strains of flu. Only one night spent on the Kolloi Malai was enough to catch one of these deadly diseases.

Christians called these mountains the Mountains of Death for another reason, too. There was no one among all the people who lived there who knew about Jesus. They all lived in fear of the spirits and idols of Hinduism and the powerful Hindu priests. The people thought that the spirits and idols were their only hope for protection against the sickness, pain and death of the Mountains of Death. They did not know about the God who saves sinners who confess their sins to Him and His power to take care of them in sickness and even in death.

"Will the peoples of the Kolloi Malai be left to die in their sins or will someone go and tell them about Jesus who can save them? Who will go to the Mountains of Death?" These questions reached the ears of a rich, English young lady dressed in silk and pearls and her new husband--Evelyn and Jesse Brand.

"We will go," they said. "We will take medicines to help fight those terrible sicknesses. We will take the good news of Jesus to them so that they might confess their sins to Him and be saved. We will go and we will stay until we reach five mountain ranges of the Kolloi Malai...or until we die," they promised. So they left behind their nice home, their beautiful clothes and all the comforts of the

good life in England and went.

Evelyn and Jesse settled in a little village in a hut made of bamboo and mud and began their work. "We have medicines to heal you. We can teach you how to keep diseases from spreading," they told the people.

"We have come to tell you about Jesus who saves sinners who confesses their sins. You do not have to live in fear of the Hindu spirits and idols," the Brands said.

But the Hindu priest didn't want the people to hear about Jesus. "If you listen to the Brands, the spirits will be unhappy and your cattle will die," the Hindu priest threatened...and mysteriously the cattle did die!

For seven long years the Brands kept trying to help the people, yet not a one became a Christian. Should they leave? What good had they done? "Who will go to the Mountains of Death? We will...and we will stay until we reach five mountain ranges or until we die!" The Brands remembered their promise and did not give up. Instead, they prayed even harder. "Lord, show us how to reach these people on the Mountains of Death. You know the way."

Not longer after this, sickness struck the village where the Brands lived. Hundreds died. Anyone who got sick almost certainly died.

"The sick people will have to take care of themselves," the healthy villagers said. "We don't want to get sick and die, too!" So they fled into the jungle, leaving behind all the sick.

"Should we leave the village, too?" the Brands wondered. "What if our children get sick? What if we do?"

'Who will go to the Mountains of Death? Will they be left to die in their sins or will someone go and tell them about Jesus who can save them?...' 'We will go and we will stay until we reach five mountain ranges of the Kolloi Malai... or until we die!' the Brands remembered their promises and decided to stay.

"Jesus has already saved us from our sins, we are the very ones to stay and help these dying people. Perhaps now God will give us the chance to tell these people about Jesus."

So the Brands stayed in the village. They made huge pots of soup to feed all of the sick people, hoping to keep some alive and hoping to tell all about the God who saves sinners who confess their sins to Him. They even took care of the Hindu priest and his wife.

One day an urgent message came to the Brands: "Come quickly! The priest and his wife are doing worse and he has something to tell you."

The Brands hurried to see the dying man and his wife. "I have something to tell you," the priest told them. "I poisoned the cattle when the people wanted to listen to you, not a spirit as I made them think. I've been a priest all my life, but the only ones who have helped me are Christians," he told the Brands. "Please adopt my baby if I die. I want you to raise my child."

"We will raise your child as our very own," the Brands told him. Before long, the man and his wife both died and the Brands adopted their child as their own, as they said they would.

Finally terrible sickness left the village. Life could get back to normal, yet nothing would ever be the same again. The villagers came to the Brands and said, "When our own families left us to die, you stayed and cared for us. You even adopted the child of the Hindu priest who was your enemy. We want to know more about your God who saves. Tell us about Jesus."

Soon many of them confessed their sins to God and believed in Jesus. The Brands began to spread out their work to the rest of that first mountain range. God was blessing their work.

Three years later, Jesse Brand died from Blackwater Fever on the Mountains of Death, and many wondered if Evelyn Brand would go on. "Will they be left to die in their sins or will someone go and tell them about Jesus who can save them?...' 'We will go and we will stay until we reach five mountain ranges of the Kolloi Malai...or until we die.' Evelyn remembered their promises; and, for fifty more years, Evelyn Brand kept working in the Mountains of Death-- until she was 95 years old!

Over the hills she would ride on her hill pony, camping out of doors with just an umbrella and a raincoat to protect her from the torrential rains. She cleared jungle lands, pulled bad teeth, gave the villagers medicine, started schools, took care of orphans, and most of all, invited them to confess their sins to God, turn to Jesus and be saved. By the end, she was so sick with malaria, and could only walk with the help of two bamboo canes. She had so many wrinkles that you could not hardly count them, yet the Lord made her beautiful with a heart full of joy and love for Him and the people of the Mountains of Death.

"Come home to England, Evelyn," pleaded her family and friends, "You are too old. Your body is worn out."

But Evelyn would remember her promise to reach the peoples of the Kolloi Malai. She would just smile and say, "You know these mountains. If I leave, who will help the village people? Who will treat their wounds and pull their teeth and teach them about Jesus? When someone comes to take my place on the Mountains of Death, then and only then, will I retire. In any case, why preserve this old body if it's not going to be used where God needs me."

In the end, Granny Brand, as the villagers called her, died in India at the age of 95. The villagers buried her in a simple cotton sheet right on her mountain, just as she had wanted, next to her husband Jesse. And by the time she died, they had reached not five mountain ranges, but SEVEN! And many, many people had confessed their sins and turned to Jesus to be saved.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 1:8-9

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

What about us, have we confessed our sins and trusted in Jesus as our Savior? If we do, God will forgive us our sins. He will save us through Jesus and we will be His people forever!

And what about those of us who are Christians? Could there still be work to be done? Yes, there is. There are mountains, and cities and villages and neighborhoods, on the other side of the world and right here where we live, filled with people who need to hear the way to be saved. Could God want us to tell others about the God who saves sinners who confess their sins to Him? Yes, He does.

Let's praise this God who saves sinners and ask Him to help us to tell others how they can have their sins forgiven. Let's ask Him to send out more of His people to help build His Church by spreading the good news about Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and to use even us to help build His Church, by telling others about Him.

Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

We are sinners, but if we try really hard, we can please God by the good things we do.

Answer: False! There is no way we can ever be good enough to deserve to be in God's presence. Praise God for sending Jesus to save all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Why were the mountains called the Mountains of Death?

Answer: Because of all the terrible sicknesses there were there. Many people died.

b. Who went to those mountains to bring life? How did they do that?

Answer: The Brands went to these mountains to bring medicine, but most importantly, to bring the good news of Jesus. As people heard the gospel, many confessed their sins and trusted in Jesus as their Savior. This brought God's life to the Mountains of Death.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

1 John 1:8-9

"If we claim to be without ____, we deceive ____ and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and ____ and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all ____"

Answers: sin; ourselves; just; unrighteousness.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 6

Verse 2

Upon that cross of Jesus
 Mine eye at times can see
 The very dying form of One
 Who suffered there for me;
 And from my smitten heart with tears
 Two wonders I confess,
 The wonders of His glorious love
 And my unworthiness.

Words: Elizabeth C. Celphane Music: Frederick C. Maker

God's people love to think about what God has done to save them. He loved them so much that He chose to send Jesus, His One and Only Son to suffer and die for their sins on the cross. They are saved because He died in their place! Their hearts are smitten with--that is, overwhelmed-- the greatness of His love for them, such undeserving sinners.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Protector and Sustainer of Your people. They can even survive in the Mountains of Death, if You want them to.

C God, we confess that we, like the people on the Mountains of Death and all other people, deserve Your punishment. We all need to confess our sins to You and ask Your forgiveness! We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for the wonderful gifts You give to Your people, such as Your Holy Spirit living in their hearts, filling them with Your love; and, the strength to endure joyfully, everything they must endure.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Make us like the Brands: willing to go to anyway to tell others about You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If We Claim

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 7

If we claim to be without sin,
 If we claim to be without sin,
 If we claim to be without sin,
 We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But, if we confess our sins...

God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 Faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 Faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 And purify us from all unrighteousness.
 First John One, verses eight and nine.

Words: 1 John 1:8-9, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

These verses remind us that we are all sinners. We deceive ourselves if we think we are not. But, the good news is, that if we admit we are sinners and confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and save us through Jesus.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Saves Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

God is perfectly holy. There is no sin in Him at all. He is too holy for sin to even live in His presence. How gloriously magnificent and pure is He!

But we are all sinners. We have all chosen to rebel against God and His good ways. Not only can we not live in His presence because of our sinfulness, but we deserve to be shut out of His presence forever because of it. And there's nothing sinful people like us can do on our own to make ourselves acceptable to God.

We would be without hope, except for God's amazing grace and mercy! He, Himself, has done what was needed. He sent His Son Jesus to live a perfect life and offer it up as the perfect payment for the sins of His people when He suffered and died on the cross. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing He had beat sin and death. Yes, He had fully paid for the sins of God's people. He has made salvation a gift.

How can we receive this wonderful gift? God offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who confess their sins to Him and trust in Jesus as their Savior. When we do this, turning away from living life our own way and living for God instead, He will give us this gift! He will make us His people forever!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: 1 John 1:8-9, NIV 1984

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

CASE STORY

2 Samuel 11-12

Our story is: The Case of the Not-So-Secret Sinner.

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

1. Who was the Not-So-Secret Sinner? How did he try to cover up his sin?
2. Who knew about his sin and prompted him to confess it? How did God respond to this secret sinner's confession to Him?

This story takes place in Old Testament times about 2000 years before Jesus lived on earth. It's about David.

David was a godly man who wanted to love and obey God, but David did not do this perfectly. For you see, David was also a Secret Sinner. What's the Secret Sinner? Someone who struggles sin in his heart and gives into it, especially when others weren't watching. He might look like he's doing all the right things, but he's a sinner nonetheless.

It all happened one spring in Jerusalem. David had sent his soldiers off war against their enemies, the Ammonites. Usually David went with them to war, but for some reason, this year he chose to stay home, leaving army captain Joab in charge, forty miles away on the battlefield.

One evening David went up on the roof of his house to look out over Jerusalem. As he did, he noticed a very beautiful woman. "She is so beautiful!" David thought. "I must find out who she is and meet her!" David called a servant to his side, "Who is that woman?" he asked.

"That is Bathsheba, the dearly loved wife of Uriah Hittite, one of your mighty men," the servant replied.

Now David did not care that Bathsheba was already married...though he should have. He did not care that she was the dearly loved wife of one of his best, most loyal soldiers...though he should have. David was a man who loved God and wanted to obey Him. He knew that God would not want him to take someone else's wife. But just right then, he did not even care what God thought... though he should have. Instead, David ignored all the things he knew he should do and did what he WANTED to do. He ordered Bathsheba brought him. David had become a secret sinner! Who could see his secret sin, anyway? Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, away at war. Servants could be kept quiet. Bathsheba could be kept quiet. David's secret sin was safe...or so he thought.

Then some news came to David that wouldn't keep

quiet: Bathsheba was going to have a baby—his baby!, David knew that he would have to do more to keep his secret sin secret. So he thought up yet another secret sin to cover up his first one. He would use Captain Joab and the Ammonites to get rid of Uriah completely. If Uriah was dead, Bathsheba could become his wife. Then no one would know his secret sin.

David sent a letter to Joab, putting his plan into action. He wrote: "Joab, my captain, When next you lay siege on Rammah, do not fail to put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die. Signed, David, the King."

Joab was puzzled by King's letter. What a strange order! This wasn't like King David. But Joab obeyed it anyway. He changed his battle plans to make sure that the King's wishes would be met. He put Uriah in the front-lines. The Ammonites attacked the Israelites in the fields outside Rammah, then Joab ordered the soldiers to charge the gates of Rammah. Uriah and others on the front lines fought close to the walls of the city. Ammonite soldiers stationed on the top of the walls let fly showers of arrows upon them. Before long, many of David's best soldiers died that day, including Uriah—all because of David's secret sin.

A few days later a messenger brought the news David was waiting for. Uriah the Hittite had been killed in battle. David's secret sin was covered up! Who could know his secret sin now? It was covered up completely now that Uriah was dead. He was free to marry Bathsheba and no one had to know about his sins. Kings often had more than one wife in those days. No one would think anything of his marrying Bathsheba now. She was a widow with no one to take care of her. People would think David was doing a good thing by marrying her. But after all, what did they expect from good King David, the man after God's own heart, the king who sang praises to the God he loved. Bathsheba could come to live as David's wife in his palace. No one would have to know that he was really just covering up his sins. After all, who could see a secret sin anyway? No one! Well...almost no one. God had seen David's secret sins. Nothing can be hidden from God. And God was very displeased with what David had done.

God sent his special messenger, the prophet Nathan, to talk with David. "David, I have a story to tell you."

"Tell me your story, Nathan," David replied.

"There were two men who lived in the same town, one

was very rich and one was very poor. The rich man had lots of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe (girl) lamb. He raised it like it was his daughter, he loved it so much. He fed it food and water from his table. At night, it slept in his arms," Nathan told David.

"One day a traveler came to stay at the rich man's house and eat at his table. But instead of using one of his many sheep or cattle to make the meal, the rich man took the poor man's ewe lamb and served it," Nathan said.

David burned with anger and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you all the many things that once were his, and all of Israel and Judah, too. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you reject my Word and disobey my laws? You had Uriah the Hittite killed with the sword of the Ammonites and took his own, dear wife. You sinned in secret, thinking that no one will see,' the LORD told David through the prophet Nathan, "but now your sin will lead to trouble and sadness in your family that everyone will be able to see."

Then David saw his sin for what it was. He had stolen someone else's wife! He had murdered a man! He had tried to cover up his sins! How sinful he was.

David was truly sorry for what he had done and confessed his sin: "What you say is true, Nathan." I have sinned against the LORD." He thought he was keeping his sins a secret, but now he could see that you can never keep your sins a secret from God.

Nathan replied, "You know that the law says you deserve to die because you have stolen another man's wife and because you killed someone on purpose. But the LORD has chosen to forgive you instead. He has taken away your sin. You are not going to die."

David was a secret sinner, but David was still a man who loved God. When Nathan left, David prayed to God. He turned away from his sins and confessed them to God. He said, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Cleanse me from my sin. For I know

my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts....Hide your face from my sins...create in me a pure heart, O God...save my from [guilt], O God, the God who saves me." (Psalm 51)

God heard David's prayer and forgave him. What a merciful God is the LORD!

Our Bible Truth Is:

God Forgives Sinners Who Confess Their Sins

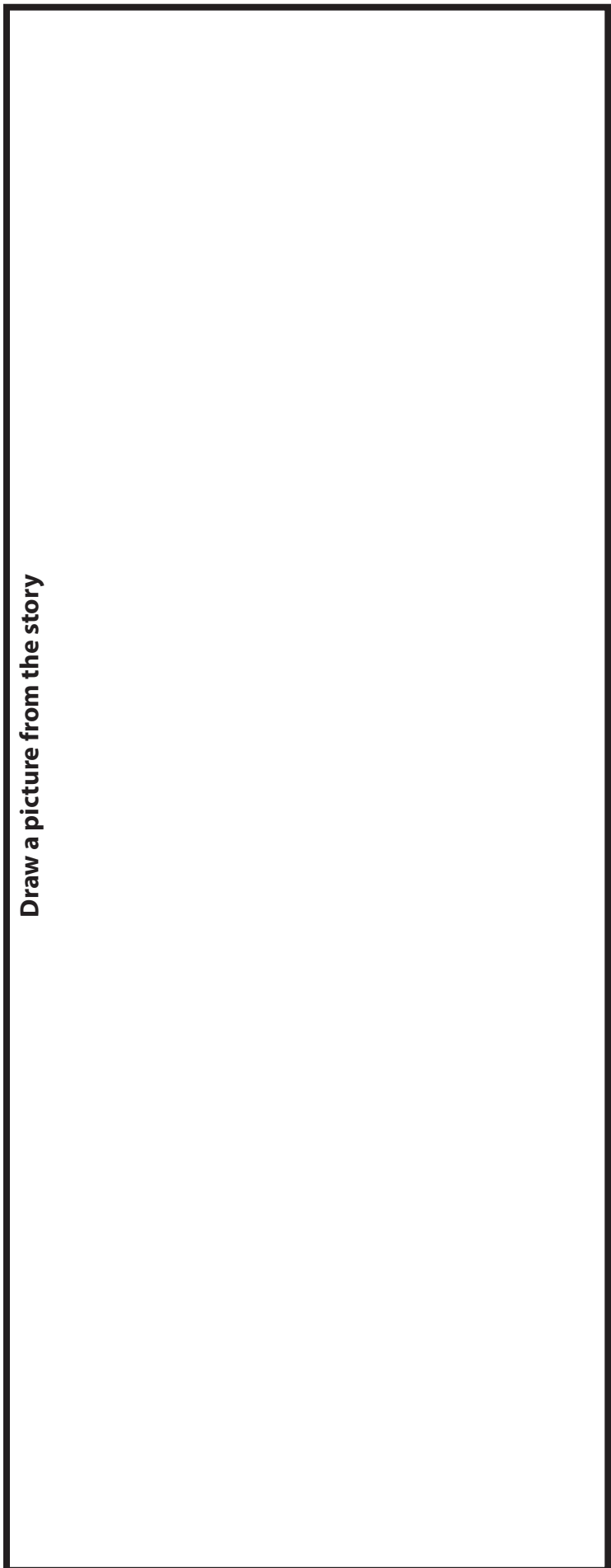
Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 1:8-9

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

David was a secret sinner who confessed his sins and was forgiven. What about you and me? Are we secret sinners? Have we sinned and thought, "Who could see a secret sin anyway?" Are there sins we hide deep inside that we try to hide from others and from God? Let's not forget the lesson of David, the Secret Sinner: no one can ever hide their sins from God. He knows all our sins, even the ones no one else knows. But don't forget the lesson of David, the man of God, either: God forgives those who confess their sins to Him and ask for forgiveness.

God knows that we are sinners. He wants us to confess our sins to Him so that we can be forgiven. Let's praise this God who delights in saves sinners who confess their sins, even the darkest, most secret ones, to Him. Let's ask Him to show us our sins, help us to confess them to Him and trust in Him as our own Savior.

Note about this story: I have been careful to leave in the key elements to the story, while being sensitive to the nature of David's sin and the ages of the children listening to the story. I think it ample for the children to know that David thought Bathsheba attractive without adding in the fact that she is bathing when he sees her. I also think it is enough for Bathsheba to be pregnant without presenting more details. Please use your discretion to adapt the story even more. You easily could leave out the pregnancy and just say that he wanted to snatch Uriah's wife.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

As sinners, we would be without hope, if it weren't for God sending Jesus to save us. He promises to save all who confess and turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Not-So-Secret Sinner? How did he try to cover up his sin?

Answer: David. He had Bathsheba's husband killed in battle to get rid of him.

b. Who knew about his sin and prompted him to confess it? How did God respond to this secret sinner's confession to Him?

Answer: The LORD knew. He used Nathan the prophet to help David see his sins and turn away from them. The LORD forgave David when he confessed his sins.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

1 John 1:8-9

"If we claim to be ___ sin, we ___ ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we ___ our sins, he is faithful and just and will ___ us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Answers: without; deceive; confess; forgive.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 6

Verse 2

Upon that cross of Jesus
 Mine eye at times can see
 The very dying form of One
 Who suffered there for me;
 And from my smitten heart with tears
 Two wonders I confess,
 The wonders of His glorious love
 And my unworthiness.

Words: Elizabeth C. Celphane Music: Frederick C. Maker

God's people love to think about what God has done to save them. He loved them so much that He chose to send Jesus, His One and Only Son to suffer and die for their sins on the cross. They are saved because He died in their place! Their hearts are smitten with--that is, overwhelmed-- the greatness of His love for them, such undeserving sinners.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Forgiver of Your Sinful People.

C God, we confess that we, like David, sometimes try to be secret sinners. We don't like You to find out our sin. We confess them to You now. Please forgive us!

T God, we thank You for being so good to David that You would send Nathan to help bring him to see his sin and confess it. How merciful and kind You are to Your people to show them their sins and to forgive them!

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to confess our sins—even our secret sins-- to You. Help us to turn away from them and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If We Claim

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 7

If we claim to be without sin,
 If we claim to be without sin,
 If we claim to be without sin,
 We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But, if we confess our sins...

God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 Faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 Faithful and just and will forgive our sins,
 And purify us from all unrighteousness.
 First John One, verses eight and nine.

Words: 1 John 1:8-9, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

These verses remind us that we are all sinners. We deceive ourselves if we think we are not. But, the good news is, that if we admit we are sinners and confess our sins to God, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and save us through Jesus.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

Jesus Is the Only Way to Be Saved

The Bible tells us that we have all rebelled against God and deserve His punishment for our sins. It tells us that our sins are so great that there is no way that we can ever earn God's forgiveness on our own. None of us can ever save ourselves.

But the good news is that God can! He has provided the way of salvation for sinful people through His Son, Jesus.

Jesus came to earth as a man. He was fully God and fully man. How amazing! He lived a perfect life. He's the only one who has ever done that! On the cross, Jesus offered up His life. He suffered and died as the perfect sacrifice needed for the sins of God's people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing that He had completely paid for their sins. Yes! He had won the victory over sin and death for them!

Now all who turn away from living a life of sin (repent) and put their trust in Jesus as their Savior will be forgiven their sins. They will be saved from the punishment for their sins they deserve and will live as God's dearly loved people forever.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: John 14:2-6, NIV 1984

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

CASE STORY

John 11-14

Our story is called:

The Case of the Way-Maker.

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

1. Who was the Way-Maker?
2. To where did He make the way? How did He make the way?

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

Jerusalem was packed with thousands of Jews who had come to celebrate Passover. Every Passover was exciting, but news that Jesus had raised Lazarus, a man from the nearby town of Bethany, from death to life made this one even more exciting than usual. Could Jesus be God's promised Messiah, people wondered.

When the word spread that Jesus was staying in Bethany with Lazarus and his sisters, many decided to go see Jesus and this man Jesus had raised to life.

The next day, Jesus headed for Jerusalem, along with his disciples and a crowd of others. "Go to the village ahead of you," Jesus told two of His disciples. "There you will find a donkey's colt tied up, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here."

The disciples found the colt just as Jesus said and brought it to Him. Threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on its back. Jesus' time had come. He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey as the Messiah, the King of Israel, just as the prophets had foretold long ago.

As Jesus came to the top of the Mount of Olives, another large crowd came the hill to greet Him. "This is our king, the Messiah, we must give Him a royal welcome into the royal city!" people exclaimed. "Throw down your cloaks for the King to tread on. Plain ground is too good for Him. Get palm branches and wave them to honor Him as our king!"

The road was soon covered with cloaks and the air filled with waving palm branches. The crowd began to praise God for Jesus. "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest! Blessed in the King of Israel, the Messiah!" they shouted.

How did Jesus react to the crowd's praise? Not as you might imagine. Jesus was weeping out loud! He knew these people were praising Him for the wrong reasons. They thought He had come to get rid of their enemies, the Romans, and bring in happy days of life in a great, new

Israel. But He had come to bring them eternal life with God as He offered up His life as the perfect payment for God's people's sins. Soon these cheering crowds would reject Him and call for Him to die, when they saw Jesus had not come to give them what they wanted. And so they did, in Jesus' next few days in Jerusalem, until by Thursday, few but Jesus' closest disciples still followed Him.

That Thursday night, Jesus gathered with His twelve disciples to celebrate the Passover Feast. The disciples might have thought this was just a Passover like the rest, but Jesus knew otherwise: it was the night before He would die on the cross for the sins of God's people. Jesus used that Passover dinner to explain to His disciples what He was about to do.

Instead of beginning the meal with the usual Passover prayer, Jesus got up from the table and did something that completely shocked His disciples: He took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist, like a lowly slave would do. He poured water into a bowl and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel wrapped around him. The disciples were shocked! No one touched another person's dirty feet--especially not an honored teacher!

When Jesus knelt down in front of Peter to wash his feet Peter said in horror, "Lord, you aren't going to wash my feet, are you?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

Jesus wasn't really worried about the dirt on their feet. He was washing them as a picture of what He would do for them and all of God's people, the next day, when He suffered and died on the cross. Jesus was making the Way to the Father for all His sinful people. He had come to clean something a lot dirtier than feet with something much more precious than water. He loved them so much that He had come to wash away their dirty, sinful hearts and lives with His very own blood as He would give up His life on the cross as the perfect payment for their sins the very next day. He was the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one could come to the Father but by Him. They--nor any of God's people-- could ever come to the Father and enjoy eternal life with them in heaven, unless He did this shameful, terrible, dirty job.

When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to His place at the table. Now it

was time for the Passover Meal. This was usually one of the happiest celebrations of the year as the Jews remembered how God freed them from slavery in Egypt and had led them by Moses to the Promised Land. But once more Jesus changed things, and His words made this dinner far from a celebration:

"This is my body broken for you," Jesus told them as He broke the bread and passed it around for them all to eat some of it. "This is my blood poured out for you to make a new covenant with God," Jesus told them as He passed the cup for them to drink from.

"The hour has come for me to go away," Jesus told them. "One of you will plot with the Jewish leaders and betray me into their hands."

The disciples were in shock "Surely not !!!" they each exclaimed.

"Yes, it will be one of you who eats at this table with me even now," Jesus told them. "And when the time comes for my arrest, you all will abandon me. Peter, you will even deny three times that you have ever known me!"

What awful news this was to the disciples. They would abandon Jesus! Jesus would be arrested and would die!

"Where are you going, Jesus? Why can't we come with You?" Thomas asked the question they were all thinking. They still didn't understand this was all part of God's good plan to make the way of salvation for His people. They were so upset!

"Don't be troubled! Trust in God. Trust also in me," Jesus told them. "Everything is not just falling apart as you think. Everything is completely in control and going as planned. I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. I am making the Way for God's sinful people to come to the Father. No one goes to the Father, except through me. If I do not do this, then no one goes to the Father. I am the Truth: believe in the Father and believe in me! I am the Life: after this is over, you will see me again. I am going away to prepare a place for you in heaven--my Father's house. I will go away, but one day I will come back to get you and take you to be with Me forever."

That night, the disciples watched in horror as everything began to happen just as Jesus told them it would. Judas Iscariot led Jewish soldiers to arrest Jesus. The disciples ran away and abandoned Him. Peter denied knowing Jesus three times... and then the rooster crowed. Worst of all, they watched the next day as Jesus' body was broken and

His blood poured out as He died on the cross. Jesus was doing the dirty job of washing away the sins of all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him, as He had said He would.

But horror turned to joy when on the third day! Jesus rose up victorious from the grave and appeared to His disciples, just as He said He would. Now they knew He was the Way: He had made the way for sinful people to come to God the Father. Now they knew that He was the Truth: everything He had them had come true. Now they knew that He was the Life: death could not hold Him in the grave. Now all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him would have their sins forgiven and eternal life in God's heavenly kingdom. There, they will never know pain, sadness or death again. Only the delight of close fellowship with God and His people forever!

Jesus was the Way, the Truth and the Life! And now it was time for His disciples to spread the news: "All authority has been given Me in heaven and earth! I rule over all," Jesus told them. "So now go into the entire world and tell them the good news that I have made the way for them to be saved. Make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything I've taught you". And so they did...and so they still are.

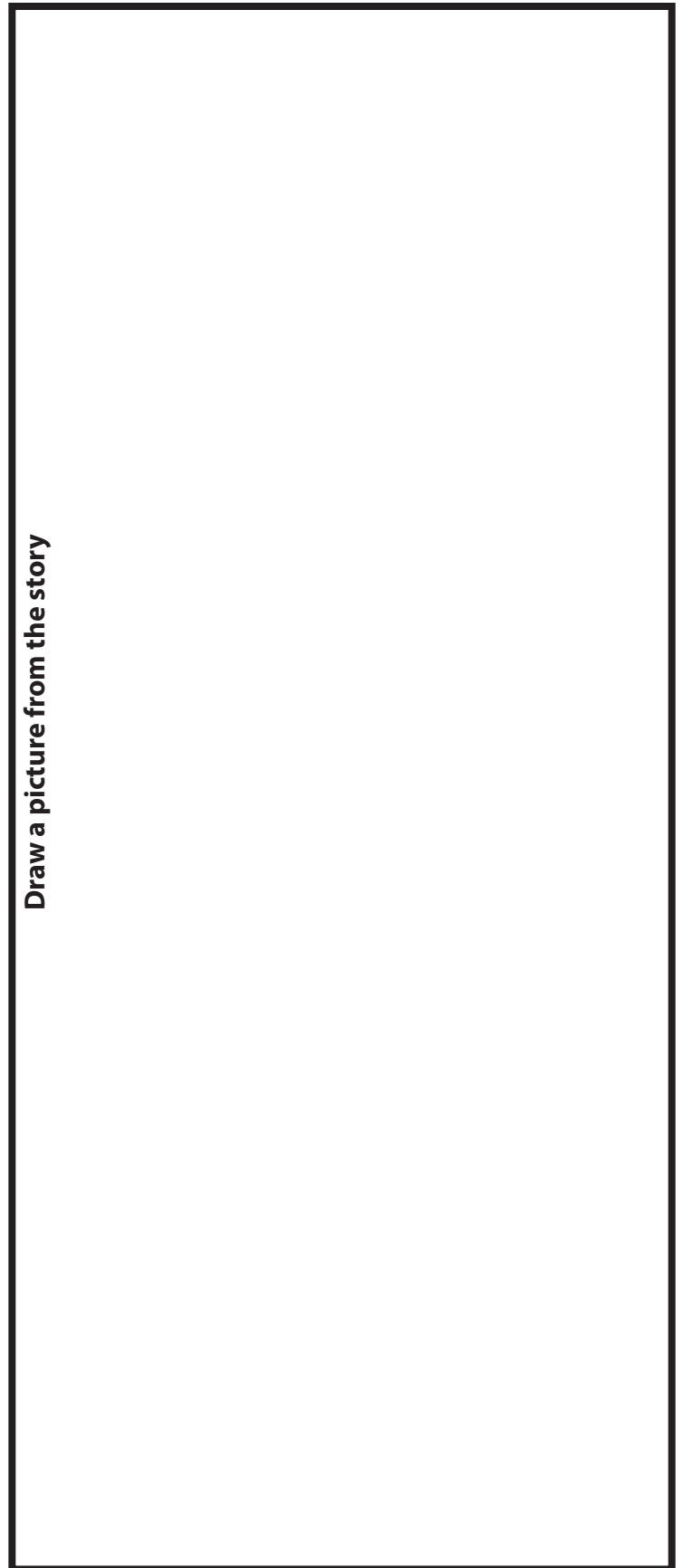
Our Bible Truth is: Jesus is the Only Way to Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: John 14:2-6

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life no one comes to the Father, except through Me." These are words for us to think about, too. They are words of warning for us and all people. "No one comes to the Father..." there is no way to the Father except through Jesus. We can never make ourselves acceptable to God without Him. But they are words of hope: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." To all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus, He promises to forgive them, save them, and one day to bring them to live with Him forever.

Let's praise Jesus for being the Way, the Truth and the Life. And let's ask Him to help us to believe in Him and to tell others about Him so that we all might know the greatest delight of knowing Him now and enjoy life with Him forever.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

The Bible tells us that some of us have rebelled against God more than others. If we haven't sinned too much, then we can work really hard and save ourselves from our sins.

Answer: False! The Bible tells us that all of us have sinned against God and none of us can ever do enough good to save ourselves from the punishment our sins deserve. We all need a Savior!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Way-Maker?

Answer: Jesus.

b. To where did He make the way? How did He make the way?

Answer: He made the way for God's sinful people to become God's people, getting to know Him and live with Him forever.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

John 14:2-6

"In my Father's ___ are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will ___ and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the ___ to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the ___ and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Answers: house; come back; way; truth.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for making the way to You, Yourself, by sending Your Son, Jesus, to do what we could never do ourselves.

C God, we confess that like most of the people in Jerusalem, we often just want You to give us the good earthly things we want. Often times we don't really want Your far greater gift of eternal life. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to give sinful people what they really need--salvation--even when He knew they would treat Him so terribly and so dishonorably.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us all to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 8

Verse 1

To God be the glory,
great things He hath done;
So loved He the world
that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life
an atonement for sin,
And opened the lifegate
that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father,
Thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory,
great things He hath done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

We give glory to God for giving us His Son who He loved so much to be the payment for sins. Sinners could never pay for their sins. Only by Jesus giving up His life in the place of sinners could there ever be a way for them to come to the Father.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

In My Father's House

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 9

"In my Father's house are many rooms," Jesus said.
"I go prepare, prepare a place for you.
You know the way."
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,"
Thomas said to Him.
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,
How can we know the way?"

"I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.
I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.
No one can come to the Father, except through me."
John Fourteen, two through six.

Words adapted from John 14:2-6 Constance Dever © 2011

On the night before He died on the cross, Jesus comforted Thomas and the other disciples that He was making the way for them to be saved. He called heaven, His Father's house and promises them that He is about to make the way for them to be able to live there. There was still much they didn't understand yet, but later, after He rose from the dead it all began to make sense. On the cross, He paid for God's people's sins. He made the way for them to go to heaven. They could depend upon Him and His promises. He was the truth. He would beat sin and death for them so they could have eternal life. He would prepare a place for them and all of God's people in heaven to be with Him. And one day, He will come back to take them to be there with Him forever. How wonderful that will be!

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

Jesus Is the Only Way to Be Saved

The Bible tells us that we have all rebelled against God and deserve His punishment for our sins. It tells us that our sins are so great that there is no way that we can ever earn God's forgiveness on our own. None of us can ever save ourselves.

But the good news is that God can! He has provided the way of salvation for sinful people through His Son, Jesus.

Jesus came to earth as a man. He was fully God and fully man. How amazing! He lived a perfect life. He's the only one who has ever done that! On the cross, Jesus offered up His life. He suffered and died as the perfect sacrifice needed for the sins of God's people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing that He had completely paid for their sins. Yes! He had won the victory over sin and death for them!

Now all who turn away from living a life of sin (repent) and put their trust in Jesus as their Savior will be forgiven their sins. They will be saved from the punishment for their sins they deserve and will live as God's dearly loved people forever.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: John 14:2-6, NIV 1984

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Cheeky Chieftess.

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

1. Who was the Cheeky Chieftess?
2. What did she do that was cheeky? What did this show to her people? ("Cheeky" means to do something bold and rebellious.)

This story is not in the Bible. It is a true story about God's people obeying Jesus' command to spread the good news of salvation to the whole world. It takes place around 1815 in Hawaii.

The Hawaiian Islands are a very, very beautiful group of islands in the Pacific Ocean. There are many beautiful flowers and birds. And mountains made from erupting volcanoes rise high above the sparkling, clear ocean that crashes in thunderous waves on the shores of white sand beaches.

But as beautiful as everything looked in Hawaii, not everything was wonderful. The people were trapped in fear of idols carved out of stone and wood. They believed the spirits of those idols would harm them, if they did not worship them. Coconuts, bananas, hogs and many other things, they offered to these fake gods, who they believed controlled their happiness.

They were especially fearful of the passionate, ill-tempered goddess Pele. Pele, they believed, was the volcano goddess and lived in the mighty volcano Kileaua. They believed that she caused the volcano to spew out fiery lava and ash on anyone who did not give her proper offerings or respect. Anyone who did not climb up to Haema'uma'u caldera (a caldera is the mouth of the volcano where lava can come out) on Kileaua and offer her some of the juicy "ohelo" bush berries that grew on the mountain slopes and say:

"E Pele, eia ka 'ohelo 'au;

(Oh, Pele, here are your branches)

e taumaha aku wau 'ia 'oe (I offer some to you)

e'ai ho'i au tetahi (some I also eat),"fearing she would send lava from the volcano to fall on them and their village, if they did not.

How sad it was that the people lived in fear of Pele, who was nothing but a pretend goddess of stone! How sad that they did not know about the true God and about Jesus, who was the only way to be saved from their sins!

Did God care about the Hawaiian people? Did He want them to know the way to be saved? Yes, He did. And five thousand miles away, in Connecticut in the United States, God was preparing people to go and tell them.

A young man, with tanned skin and jet black hair, stood up before a crowded church of people. "Aloha! Greetings!" he said with a smile. "I am Obookiah. I come from Hawaii. I am here to ask your help. You may have heard what a beautiful land Hawaii is, but its people are in terrible bondage to idols. Hawaii gods: they are wood; they burn. I want to go home, put them in a fire, and burn them up. They do not see, they do not hear, they do not do anything! We make them with our hands. Yet my people live in terror of these gods, especially Pele the volcano goddess. My people make many sacrifices to these idols. They even sacrifice people to them! They do not know Iesu Kristo (Jesus Christ) or the Bible. They do not even have a written language or know how to read. They know nothing of the way to be saved. They are dying in their sins!"

"I, too, would still be there living in fear of those gods, never having heard of Jesus. But God in His great mercy brought me to America where kind men told me about Him. I have found forgiveness from my sins through Jesus," Obookiah told them.

"Does God care about the Hawaiian people? Does He want them to know the way to be saved? Yes, He does! It is too much for me to stay here, while my people in Hawaii are dying without Him. They need to know the way to God!"

"Who will help me? Who will come with me to Hawaii and tell my people about Iesu Kristo?" Obookiah asked them. "Who will help me give them the Bible and teach them to read? It might be dangerous. They might want to kill us for going against Pele and the other gods of wood and stone, but for Jesus and the Hawaiian people it is worth risking your life!"

Many people heard Obookiah's message and wanted to help. Some said, "We will give money so you can go." Others said, "We will go, if you go with us."

Obookiah made preparations to go. The Hawaiian language had never been written down, so Obookiah made up the Hawaiian alphabet and a beginning reading book. He even began to translate the Bible into Hawaiian. Before long, he would be sailing back to Hawaii and begin teaching his people about Jesus. He wanted them to have God's Word to read themselves. He was so excited!

Then something happened that changed all of Obookiah's plans. Obookiah came down with a terrible sickness called typhoid fever. Day after day, night after night, Obookiah fought the fever, but he got weaker and weaker, until at last, he died.

The news of Obookiah's death spread throughout Connecticut and America. "What! Obookiah's dead? We thought surely he was the one God had chosen to take good news of Jesus to Hawaii. Who will dare go to Hawaii now that Obookiah is not here to take them?"

Did God care about the Hawaiian people? Did He want them to know the way to be saved? Yes, He did. He worked in the hearts of fourteen men and women and gave them courage to go.

"We will go!" said a group of fourteen men and women! "We want the Hawaiians to know Jesus, the only way to be saved. We want them to know how to read so that they can read God's Word for themselves. We are willing to risk our lives to tell them, even without Obookiah," they decided.

So the fourteen brave men and women sailed to Hawaii. They set up a school and a church building and began to tell the Hawaiians about Jesus. "Turn from your idols, turn from Pele. Turn and trust in Jesus. He is the only way to be saved," they told the people.

"What! Turn from our gods and Pele? How can we do that? They will be angry and seek revenge if we don't sacrifice to them," the people said. So very few would have dared turn from the idols they worshiped and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

But the missionaries knew they must not give up. How would these Hawaiian people know the way to God if they did! So they kept praying and they kept teaching. They needed to keep trusting. They knew God would be faithful. And so He was!

One day the high chieftess Kapi'olani began to come to the missionaries' school. She wanted to learn to read like everyone else. She listened as the missionaries told the class about Jesus. "Turn from your idols, turn from Pele. Turn and trust in Jesus," she heard them say. "He is the only way to be saved." But unlike the other people, when Kapi'olani heard the good news of Jesus, she turned from her sins and believed.

Kapi'olani quickly began to grow as a Christian. God put a great love in her heart for Him, and a great desire for her people to know and love Him, too. "These people will

never believe in Jesus until they know that He is more powerful than Pele," she told the missionaries. "I must defy Pele to her face in front of them. Perhaps then they will see that Pele is not goddess at all and turn to Jesus, the only way to be saved," she believed.

"My people," the high chieftess said, "these people have come to tell you about Jesus, the only way to be saved, yet you still fear the island gods of stone and wood. Those gods are no gods at all. Not even Pele, who we have lived in fear of all these years. Follow me up to Haema'uma'u caldera to the place we call the home of Pele. There I will defy Pele and prove to you that she is no goddess at all," she told them.

The people followed Kapi'olani up the lush green trail all the way up to the stark, lifeless top of Kileaua and the Haema'uma'u caldera. There next to the hot, lava-filled mouth of the volcano, Kapi'olani plucked 'ohelo berries off of the branch she held in her hand.. "My people, you know that we are supposed to ask permission and make an offering to Pele before eating any berries from her mountain or she will send lava down, but watch me defy Pele!" And with that Kapi'olani took some of the berries and put them straight in her mouth! If that was not enough, she then picked up stones and threw them deep into the hot lava below as if to stone Pele, herself. The people gasped with horror and cringed, waiting in horror for Pele's fierce anger to rise up and strike Kapi'olani down with lava. But nothing happened.

"Now my people, do you see?" Kapi'olani said. "Pele is no goddess at all. She is only an idol. Come now; listen to the good news about the true God. Turn to Jesus, the only way to be saved," she urged them.

When the people saw that Pele was powerless, their hearts opened to the good news about Jesus. At last, many turned to Him and were saved.

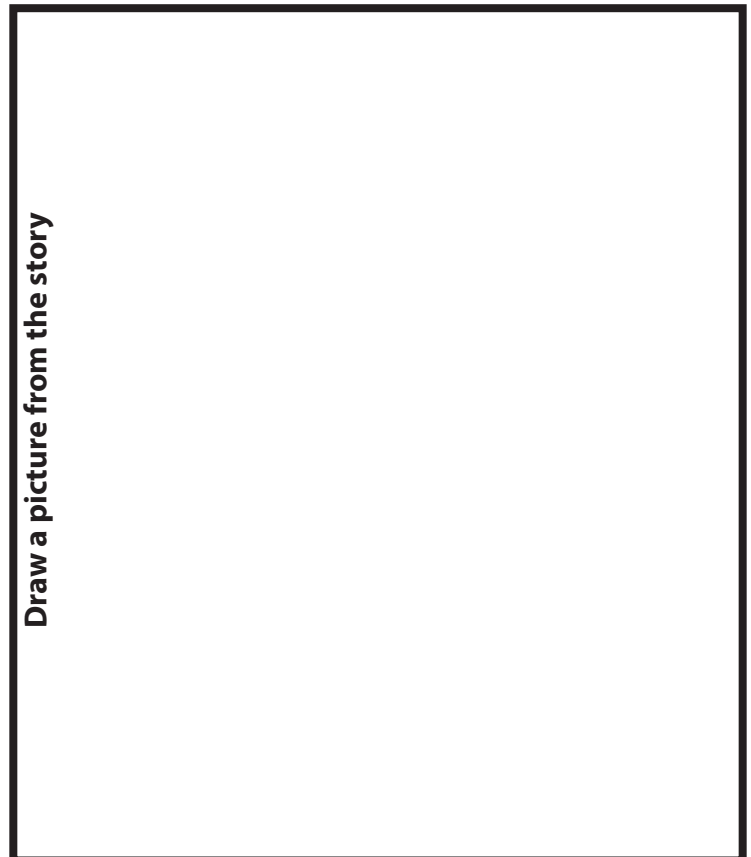
Our Bible Truth is: Jesus is the Only Way to Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: John 14:2-6

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Did you know that there are still so many places in the world where people have not heard about Jesus, where there is no written language or no Bible? How is it that these people will here about Jesus the only way to be saved? It will take more brave men and women like Obookiah, Kapi'olani, and the believers from Connecticut who are willing to risk their lives to tell others about Him.

Let's praise the God Who Saves. Let's ask that He would send out more brave people to tell others about Him. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, just like He worked in Kapi'olani's, that we might turn away from our sins and trust Him as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to even make us brave enough to go to tell people in faraway places about Him, if He wants us to.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

We are sinners, but if we try really hard, we can please God by the good things we do.

Answer: False! There is no way we can ever be good enough to deserve to be in God's presence. Praise God for sending Jesus to save all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Cheeky Chieftess?

Answer: Kapi'olani.

b. What did she do that was cheeky? What did this show to her people? ("Cheeky" means to do something bold and rebellious.)

Answer: She picked some of the special Ohelo berries and ate them without first making a sacrifice. Then she threw stones into the mouth of her volcano. Both of these things, the people believed would cause Pele to erupt with anger. She did this to show them that Pele was no goddess and to help her people turn to faith in Jesus.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

John 14:2-6

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told _____. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with _____ that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are _____, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one _____ to the Father except through me."

Answers: you; me; going; comes.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the One, True God.

C God, we confess that like the Hawaiian people in the story, we are sinners who need to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. And, confess that many times, like the people of Connecticut, we are scared to tell others the good news of Jesus. We all need Savior!

T God, we thank You for sending out people to even our part of the world, that we might know the way to be saved.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to tell others about Jesus. Send out Your people to all parts of the world so that those who still have not heard, may hear, repent and believe.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 8

Verse 1

To God be the glory,
great things He hath done;
So loved He the world
that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life
an atonement for sin,
And opened the lifegate
that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father,
Thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory,
great things He hath done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

We give glory to God for giving us His Son who He loved so much to be the payment for sins. Sinners could never pay for their sins. Only by Jesus giving up His life in the place of sinners could there ever be a way for them to come to the Father.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

In My Father's House

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 9

"In my Father's house are many rooms," Jesus said.
"I go prepare, prepare a place for you.
You know the way."
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,"
Thomas said to Him.
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,
How can we know the way?"

"I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.
I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.
No one can come to the Father, except through me."
John Fourteen, two through six.

Words adapted from John 14:2-6 Constance Dever © 2011

On the night before He died on the cross, Jesus comforted Thomas and the other disciples that He was making the way for them to be saved. He called heaven, His Father's house and promises them that He is about to make the way for them to be able to live there. There was still much they didn't understand yet, but later, after He rose from the dead it all began to make sense. On the cross, He paid for God's people's sins. He made the way for them to go to heaven. They could depend upon Him and His promises. He was the truth. He would beat sin and death for them so they could have eternal life. He would prepare a place for them and all of God's people in heaven to be with Him. And one day, He will come back to take them to be there with Him forever. How wonderful that will be!

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

Jesus Is the Only Way to Be Saved

The Bible tells us that we have all rebelled against God and deserve His punishment for our sins. It tells us that our sins are so great that there is no way that we can ever earn God's forgiveness on our own. None of us can ever save ourselves.

But the good news is that God can! He has provided the way of salvation for sinful people through His Son, Jesus.

Jesus came to earth as a man. He was fully God and fully man. How amazing! He lived a perfect life. He's the only one who has ever done that! On the cross, Jesus offered up His life. He suffered and died as the perfect sacrifice needed for the sins of God's people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing that He had completely paid for their sins. Yes! He had won the victory over sin and death for them!

Now all who turn away from living a life of sin (repent) and put their trust in Jesus as their Savior will be forgiven their sins. They will be saved from the punishment for their sins they deserve and will live as God's dearly loved people forever.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: John 14:2-6, NIV 1984

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

CASE STORY

Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 54:6; Acts 1

Our story is: The Case of the Light for the Unlikely.

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

1. Who was the Light? Why was He called the Light?
2. Who were Likely People to receive Him and who were the Unlikely People to receive Him? What did both kinds of people need to do to receive the Light?

This story starts out in Old Testament times, thousands of years before Jesus lived on earth.

"If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine," the LORD promised the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai. And hadn't He shown them already just how precious they were to Him? He had just sent Moses to rescue them from slavery under the mighty Egyptians. He had just protected them from the Egyptian soldiers with a great pillar of cloud, and even parted the Red Sea for them escape unharmed. He had given them His good laws and made a solemn covenant promise to always love and care for them. He was giving them the beautiful land of Canaan to live in and enjoy as their very own. Oh, to be an Israelite! To be God's treasured possession! This was certainly a promise they could trust!

But what about the rest of the world? All the rest of those people, whom the Israelites lumped together under one big word: Gentiles. Did God really not care about them? Sometimes the Israelites acted as if God didn't, even though He had told them otherwise. "I'm going to bless all nations through a child that come through you and your family, the Israelites," the LORD had told Abraham. Who would that child be? The Messiah, Jesus, to save them from their sins.

Through Isaiah, God told the Israelites what He would do through Jesus: "It is too small a thing for the Messiah, the Savior Jesus, to save only My people from the nation of Israel. I will also make him a light for the Gentiles, that he may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." (adapted from Isaiah 54:6)

Yes. Israel was special. But Israel was just a beginning, just a part of God's one, big plan to save a countless number of people from every nation of the world. God was using them to bring the blessing of salvation to all the people of the world, for Jesus the Messiah, the Savior, would come from Israel.

Some Gentiles came to saving faith even before Jesus came. We know a few of their stories. There was Rahab from Jericho that helped the Israelites sent to spy on her city of Jericho. And Ruth, who would be the grandmother of great King David. There were others, too. These few Gentiles looked forward in faith to the day God would send His Savior.

At last, Jesus did come. He was fully God and fully man. He lived a perfect life, then offered it up on the cross, as the perfect sacrifice for God's people, all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. He suffered and died for their sins, then on the third day, He rose up from the dead in victory over sin and death for all of God's people.

"Go into all the world, making disciples and teaching them," Jesus told His disciples, after He rose from the dead. Now, the message of salvation would be spread far and wide. Yes, it was still time for Jesus to be the Savior to any of the Israelites who trusted in Him as their Savior. But even more, Jesus was going to be the light for the Gentiles, as His disciples took the good news of salvation through Jesus to the them. So out and away the disciples went. First just to nearby cities, then to places farther and farther away.

Three believers, Paul, Silas and Luke, traveled by sea and land to a country called Macedonia, sharing the good news of Jesus as they went. One day they came to the great city of Philippi. Philippi was one of most important cities of all of Macedonia. The Roman Emperor had even made it a Roman colony! Merchants and traders came to Philippi bringing their goods from the nearby port to sell and many Roman soldiers came there to settle down and live after retiring from the army. There were temples to the Roman gods and even a coliseum for gladiator shows and Olympic games. How wonderful it would be for these people to hear the message of Jesus!

"Repent, believe, trust in Jesus and live! He is the only way to be saved from your sins." Paul told a group of people gathered for prayer by the Gangites River outside the city. These were people who heard of the Lord God and believed in Him, but had never heard about Jesus.

"Long ago, Paul told them, "The LORD spoke through the prophet Isaiah about Jesus, the coming Messiah. He told them, 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel

I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.' We have come to tell you about that Savior, Jesus Christ, that you might trust in Him as your Savior." Paul's message was eagerly accepted and many were baptized that day.

Paul and Silas rejoiced to see so many accept Jesus as their Savior, but Satan, God's great enemy, was not. Before long, big trouble was brewing for Paul and Silas. Angry men stirred up a crowd against them. City officials arrested Paul and Silas, beaten with rods and thrown into jail.

"Guard these men carefully," the city officials ordered the jailer. So he put them in the inner cell-- and fastened their feet in the stocks.

"What are these men in trouble for?" the jailer wanted to know.

"For trying to turn the people away from the Roman gods to another foreign god named Jesus who they claim to be the way to be saved!" he was told.

How the metal of the stocks must have cut into Paul and Silas' legs! How stiff their bodies must have been from being beaten! But Paul and Silas didn't grumble or complain. Instead they sang praises to God, long into the night. They knew that Jesus really was the way to be saved. He was worth suffering for, even dying for. They were grateful to God for being allowed to suffer for His name and to get to bring the good news of Jesus, the light to the Gentiles, the one who brought salvation to the nations.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that shook the prison. At once, the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. He was in a panic! He knew he would be killed if he lost any of them. He would rather kill himself than let someone else do it.

But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

What strange men these were! Beaten and imprisoned for sharing about this strange God, Jesus, who they claimed as the way to be saved. Praising Jesus' name rather than cursing Him for being put in stocks! Then, when given a chance to escape for their lives, they stay where they are and try to keep him from killing himself! Perhaps this foreign god is the true God!" the jailer thought.]

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Repent! Trust in Jesus and live! He is the only way to be saved from your sins -- you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

The next day, Paul and Silas were released from prison and sent out of Philippi. Were they heading home after their terrible beating? No, they did not. They headed out for new places to tell others about Jesus. They were stiff, bruised and sore, but they praised God. He was using them to bring the light of Jesus to the Gentiles and salvation to people of another nation, just as He had promised through the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years earlier. God's one, big plan to save His people from every land was being fulfilled.

Our Bible Truth Is: Jesus is the Only Way to Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: John 14:2-6

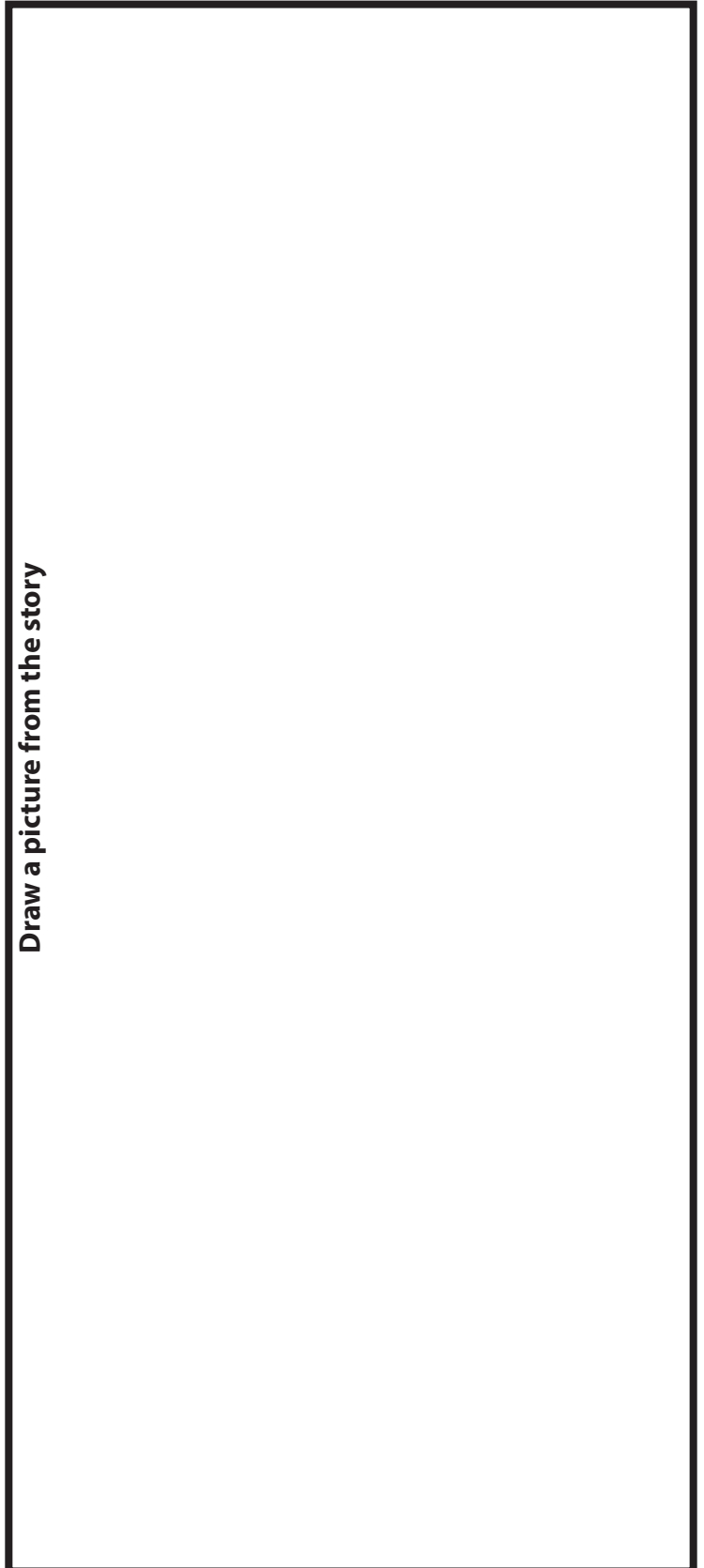
"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

What would cause Paul and Silas to praise God for getting to suffer for Him? Only their love for God and their faith that Jesus was really the only way to God. They remembered how Jesus had suffered to pay for their sins and the sins of all who turn and trust in Him. They counted it an honor to suffer so that other might know about Him.

The same message that Paul, Luke and Silas took to Macedonia is the same message we all need to hear and believe: "Repent of your sins, trust in Jesus and live! He is the only way to be saved from your sins."

Let's praise our Saving God who through Jesus made a way for sinners to come to Him. Let's ask Him for work in our hearts, helping us to repent of our sins, and believe in Him, too. Let's ask Him to give us courage to boldly tell others about Him, too, that He might use us in His one, big plan.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

As sinners, we would be without hope, if it weren't for God sending Jesus to save us. He promises to save all who confess and turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Light? Why was He called the Light?

Answer: Jesus was the Light. A light shines brightly and shows the way. Jesus, the Son of God, came to show what God was like. He not only showed the way for sinners to come to God, but He made the way, Himself.

b. Who were Likely People to receive Him and who were the Unlikely People to receive Him? What did both kinds of people need to do to receive the Light?

Answer: The people of Israel were the Likely People and the Gentiles (non-Jews) were the Unlikely people. Both Jew and Gentile must confess their sins, turn away from them and trust in Jesus as their Savior, if they are to be saved. This is the only way to God.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

John 14:2-6

"In my Father's house are many ____; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a ____ for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the ____?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father ____ through me."

Answers: rooms; place; way; except.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for loving people from every land and the fulfiller of Your one, big plan to save them through Jesus.

C God, we confess that many times we are not like Paul and Silas. We do not tell other about Jesus who need to hear. We avoid anything that would cause us to suffer, even for Jesus' sake. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for sending out people to even our part of the world, that we might know the way to be saved.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to tell others about Jesus. Send out Your people to every part of the world so that those who still have not heard, may hear, repent of their sins, and believe.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 8

Verse 1

To God be the glory,
great things He hath done;
So loved He the world
that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life
an atonement for sin,
And opened the lifegate
that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father,
Thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory,
great things He hath done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

We give glory to God for giving us His Son who He loved so much to be the payment for sins. Sinners could never pay for their sins. Only by Jesus giving up His life in the place of sinners could there ever be a way for them to come to the Father.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

In My Father's House

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 9

"In my Father's house are many rooms," Jesus said.
"I go prepare, prepare a place for you.
You know the way."
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,"
Thomas said to Him.
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,
How can we know the way?"

"I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.

I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.
No one can come to the Father, except through me."
John Fourteen, two through six.

Words adapted from John 14:2-6 Constance Dever © 2011

On the night before He died on the cross, Jesus comforted Thomas and the other disciples that He was making the way for them to be saved. He called heaven, His Father's house and promises them that He is about to make the way for them to be able to live there. There was still much they didn't understand yet, but later, after He rose from the dead it all began to make sense. On the cross, He paid for God's people's sins. He made the way for them to go to heaven. They could depend upon Him and His promises. He was the truth. He would beat sin and death for them so they could have eternal life. He would prepare a place for them and all of God's people in heaven to be with Him. And one day, He will come back to take them to be there with Him forever. How wonderful that will be!

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

We Must Trust Jesus as Our Savior and Obey Him as Our Lord.

It isn't enough to simply think that Jesus is the only way to God. We need to trust in Jesus as our own Savior; and, we need to begin a new life of living for Him.

We need to confess to God that we are a sinner and ask His forgiveness for our sins. We need to believe that Jesus suffered and died on the cross as the perfect payment for our sins; and that three days later, He rose from the dead in victory over death. We need to turn our lives over to Him, asking Him to help us to love and live for Him in everything we do.

Trusting in Jesus to be our Savior is a wonderful work that God does by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of His people. He delights for us to ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to do this work in our heart.

When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, we also accept Him as our Lord. "Lord" is an old word used in the Bible that we don't use much anymore. It means someone who is in charge and who we are to obey. The sign of someone who truly trusts in Jesus as their Savior, is whether they also are trying to live to please God.

God's people want to obey Him in everything they do, but they can't do that on their own—and they don't have to. God gives believers His Holy Spirit to live inside them and help them to grow in love and in obedience to Him. God always gives us what we need to be His people, if we but ask!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Romans 10:9-10, NIV 1984

"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

CASE STORY

Mark 2:13-17; Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27-32

Our story is called:

The Case of the Transformed Tax-Man.

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

1. Who was the Tax-Man? Why did he need transforming?
2. Who transformed him? How?

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

Matthew sat in his tax booth along the Great West Road, just outside of Capernaum. This busy road led from the rich city of Damascus in the east, to the ports of Phoenicia on the great Mediterranean Sea to the west. Matthew was the chief customs officer for the Roman leader, Herod Antipas, and his job was to collect Herod's customs tax money from every merchant's caravan that passed.

"You must collect tax from everything the merchants carry in their caravans," the Romans had told Matthew, when he started the job. "Any extra money you can get out of them is for you. That's how you get paid," they explained.

A fellow could get very rich if they were good at this job...and Matthew was! Galilee—the part of Israel where his booth was—had brought in five million dollars of customs tax money in just one year! Yes, Matthew had grown very, very rich.

But Matthew was a rich sinner. He had grown rich only by doing many sinful tricky tricks. What kinds of tricks did tax collectors like Matthew use? Well, it would look something like this:

Matthew would sit at his booth until he heard the tingling bells and clomping hoofs. This meant a merchant and his caravan of camels, loaded down with goods was approaching.

"Good morning, Master Merchant. What do you have in your caravan today?" Matthew would ask.

"Good morning to you, Master Tax Collector," replied the merchant in a less than friendly voice. He knew what Matthew was like. "Wheat from the plains, and fish from the Sea of Galilee."

"We'll see about that. I'll have to inspect each animal's load. Unpack them all," Matthew ordered.

"But Master Tax Collector, look at all these animals! You can plainly see what I have," the merchant replied.

“Do as I say or I will be forced to call in Roman soldiers to persuade you to cooperate,” Matthew warned.

“Yes, Master Tax Collector,” the merchant grumbled. Load after load was pulled from camels’ backs for Matthew to inspect.

“What is this here? This is not fish or wheat. It looks like a great deal of fine cloth. You must pay tax on it, too, my friend,” Matthew would say.

“But sir, that is not cloth for sale, it is for my family. You are only to tax those things I am selling,” the merchant would answer.

“How do I know that you have a family? I have a duty to the King Antipas and I must not fail. I will be forced to tax this cloth!” Matthew ordered. “So, let’s see, that’s 10 loads of wheat and 20 loads of fish, plus one load of fine cloth. To that we add a charge for each servant and for each animal...plus the fee for crossing the King’s bridges...that comes to ... and Matthew would lean over and show the merchant a ridiculously high amount.

“What! That is at least twice the amount I should pay!”

“Will you pay or shall I get the soldiers to force it out of you?” Matthew threatened again.

“You tax collectors are all the same! Forcing every last cent out of us hard-working merchants so you can have your fine houses and luxurious lifestyles. How can you live with yourself? I pity your mother and father for having such a child. You are a disgrace to us, Jews, you sinner!” The merchant turned his head and spit. He flung his money down on Matthew’s table and left.

“Ha, ha,” thought Matthew as he looked at the sum of money. “I’m off to a good start this morning!” Yet, deep inside Matthew knew that what the merchant had said was right. He was a disgrace to his family and his people. He was a sinner. “But, I am a rich sinner,” Matthew said to comfort himself. “I have a nice house and lots of money. And at least I have the other tax collectors and outcasts for friends.”

So now do you see how things were with Matthew? How much hope could there be for a tricky sinner like him? The Bible tells us. Here’s what happened next:

News traveled fast along the Great West Road. Matthew overheard the latest happenings from merchants as they passing through this tax station. Those coming from Capernaum told amazing things about Jesus: He did miracles! He healed the sick and forgave their sins like He

was God. Just the day before He had forgiven the sins of a paralyzed man and healed him! The man just got up, picked up his mat and walked out of the house! No one has ever seen anything like this! Great crowds had begun to follow Jesus. People wanting to be healed. People wanting to be forgiven. People wanting to hear what Jesus had to say about God.

“Now this is stunning news!” thought Matthew. “A man healing people and forgiving sins? A man who offers forgiveness for sins, as if He was God?” Perhaps a little hope rose in Matthew’s heart as he heard about Jesus. Perhaps he began to think about his life and his sin. Perhaps he began to think, “I am very rich, but I am such a sinner. I wonder if a sinner like me could be forgiven? I would like to meet this Jesus and see what he is like.”

Soon, Matthew got to do just that. Later that day, Jesus was teaching a large crowd nearby. He came down to the Great West Road and right up to Matthew’s tax booth. Jesus looked Matthew in the eyes and said, “Follow me.”

What would Matthew do? Leave behind his job, his money? It would be almost impossible to get it back if he quit, especially if he quit right then and there. And what about his house and all his money? If he followed Jesus, he would have to give all of that up. Wouldn’t he miss his good lifestyle? Matthew had a lot of big reasons to say “no” to Jesus’ offer.

But Matthew had even bigger reason to say “yes” to Jesus. “Jesus offers forgiveness of sins and has proven He has the power to do it by healing the sick. It is nice to be rich, but I am such a terrible sinner. I want forgiveness even more than riches,” thought Matthew. That settled it. Matthew turned to Jesus and said, “Yes, I will follow you!” He just got up, left everything and followed Jesus. Matthew turned away from his sinful life, believed in Jesus and followed him. Matthew was a changed man! God had forgiven and he had joy in his heart.

But it wasn’t enough for Matthew to be forgiven of his sins. He wanted the other outcasts, to hear how they, too, could have their sins forgiven, by repenting and believing in Jesus. So Matthew held a great banquet for Jesus at his house and invited a big crowd of tax collectors and other outcasts.

Jesus ate with them and told them about the Kingdom of God. Never had there been a teacher like Jesus! To eat with someone in Jesus’ day meant that you considered

them as your equal... even as family. No good Jew and certainly no teacher of God's Law would dream of eating with people like Matthew and his friends. But Jesus had come to save sinners from their sins. He knew that many of the other tax collectors and outcasts felt the burden of sin on their hearts, like Matthew. They longed to turn to God and be forgiven. Jesus would not hold back the good news of salvation from them.

But not everyone was as pleased with this news--especially the Pharisees. "Matthew the tax collector is throwing a huge feast for all the sinners and Jesus has gone to be with them!" they grumbled to each other.

They went to Matthew's house and found Jesus eating, drinking and teaching the people about the Kingdom of God. "Why do you eat and drink with 'sinners?'" the Pharisees complained to Jesus.

"You act like you have no sins. You think your good works make you right with God and you hate people who know they need God's forgiveness," Jesus replied.

"All people are sinners and need God's forgiveness. But until you know you are "sick" with sin, I cannot help you. These people here, they know they are sinners and need to turn away from their sins. So I have come to bring them forgiveness. It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Jesus told them.

The Pharisees knew the Bible better than anyone else in Jesus' day. They tried hard to keep every single works make you right with God and you hate people who know they need God's forgiveness," Jesus replied.

"All people are sinners and need God's forgiveness. But until you know you are "sick" with sin, I cannot help you. These people here, they know they are sinners and need to turn away from their sins. So I have come to bring them forgiveness. It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Jesus told them.

The Pharisees knew the Bible better than anyone else in Jesus' day. They tried hard to keep every single law they thought Jews were supposed to keep. They thought this made them acceptable to God. But Matthew and his friends knew something the Pharisees didn't understand: before God, everyone is a sinner in need of salvation. And they did something that the Pharisees didn't do: they turned and trusted in Jesus as their own Savior.

Our Bible Truth is: We Must Trust Him as Our Savior and Obey Him as Our Lord

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 10: 9-10:

"...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

Matthew and his friends listened to Jesus. They saw the amazing things He did. And many of them turned away from their sins and trusted Jesus to be their Savior. The Pharisees heard Jesus say and do the same things as Matthew and his friends, yet they would not turn away from their sins, trust in Jesus and be saved.

What about you and me? Will we be like the Pharisees and teachers of the law who know the Bible and can answer all the questions... who try hard to keep all the laws... and think that we please God by knowing a lot and doing a lot of good things? Yet, never turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior?

Or, will we be like the tax-collector Matthew and his friends, who knew they could never earn the favor of God, but must confess their sins, turn away from sinning and trust in Jesus as their own Savior?

Let's praise this Jesus, the God who Saves, who offers forgiveness and sins to the worse of sinners who turns to Him. Let's ask Him to help us to confess our sins to Him and turn and trust in His as our Savior.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: As long as we think that Jesus is the only way to God, it doesn't matter how we live. Answer: False! We must trust Jesus as our Savior, but also begin a new life of living for Him.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was the Tax-Man? Why did he need transforming? Answer: Matthew was the Tax-Man. He loved money so much that he had been willing to do bad things--such bad things, that he was not even allowed to meet for worship in the synagogue or the Temple. He had chosen money over God. b. Who transformed him? How? Answer: Jesus transformed him. He told him the truth about God and about himself. He offered Matthew forgiveness of sins and new life with God, if he would repent of his life and follow Him as his Lord.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 10:9-10 "...if you ___ with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God ___ him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your ___ that you confess and are saved." Answers: confess; raised; mouth.</p>

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>To God Be the Glory <i>PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 10</i></p> <p>Verse 2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood, To ev'ry believer the promise of God; The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.</p> <p>Refrain: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father, thro' Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.</p> <p>Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane</p> <p>Everyone who trusts in Jesus as their own Savior knows God's forgiveness for their sins. Jesus has perfectly redeemed them. That is, He has paid for all their sins so they know God and enjoy eternal life with Him. How God's people praise God for sending Jesus to make the way for them to come to Him! If we trust in Jesus like this—even if we have been the worst of sinners—we can know that God will save us, just as He has promised. This will cause us to want to give God the glory for the great things He has done for us, too!</p>

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Lover of Sinful People. You welcome them to come and be forgiven!</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we act like the Pharisees. We act like we can make ourselves good enough to please You on our own. Sometimes we don't think we really are that sinful, but, oh, how we need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for promising to send a Savior to save all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us all to confess our sins, turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to turn away from our old, sinful way of life and live for You instead.</p>

BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p>If You Confess with Your Mouth <i>PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 11</i></p> <p>If you confess, with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," And believe in your heart, That God raised Him from the dead, You will be save, you will be saved. For it is with your heart, that you believe and are justified.</p> <p>If you confess, with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," And believe in your heart, That God raised Him from the dead, You will be save, you will be saved. For it is with your mouth, that you confess and are saved. Romans Ten: nine and ten. Words: Romans 10:9-10, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2011</p> <p>To believe something in your heart is to think that something is true. To confess something is to others is to tell them what you think is true. Christians are those who believe in their hearts that Jesus is the Son of God, who died on the cross to save God's people from their sins. They believe that He rose from the dead on the third day, showing that He had beaten sin and death for them. They love telling this good news to others that they might believe and be saved,</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

We Must Trust Jesus as Our Savior and Obey Him as Our Lord.

It isn't enough to simply think that Jesus is the only way to God. We need to trust in Jesus as our own Savior; and, we need to begin a new life of living for Him.

We need to confess to God that we are a sinner and ask His forgiveness for our sins. We need to believe that Jesus suffered and died on the cross as the perfect payment for our sins; and that three days later, He rose from the dead in victory over death. We need to turn our lives over to Him, asking Him to help us to love and live for Him in everything we do.

Trusting in Jesus to be our Savior is a wonderful work that God does by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of His people. He delights for us to ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to do this work in our heart.

When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, we also accept Him as our Lord. "Lord" is an old word used in the Bible that we don't use much anymore. It means someone who is in charge and who we are to obey. The sign of someone who truly trusts in Jesus as their Savior, is whether they also are trying to live to please God.

God's people want to obey Him in everything they do, but they can't do that on their own--and they don't have to. God gives believers His Holy Spirit to live inside them and help them to grow in love and in obedience to Him. God always gives us what we need to be His people, if we but ask!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Romans 10:9-10, NIV 1984

"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Talking Tea Chests.

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

1. Who had the tea chests? How did he make them talk?
2. Who did he want them to talk to? What did they do when they heard what the tea chests had to say?

This story is not in the Bible. It is a true story about God's people obeying Jesus' command to spread the good news of salvation to the whole world. It takes place near the North Pole in Canada, in the 1830's.

"Crack! Crack! went the whip. "Now then, Curly, do your share! Come on, Puller, it's not far now," shouted the driver of the sled to his dogs.

"Crack! Crack!" The long whip snapped again, and the sled shot forward over the snow as the four, tired dogs pulled on steadily. The only sound was the tinkling of the bells on the moose-skin collars of the dogs, the crunching of the crisp snow under the sled boards, and occasionally in the distance the howling of a lone grey wolf.

Presently they passed from the open snow-field into a patch of half-burnt scrub. "Is this the place where we camp tonight?" the driver asked the two silent Indians who, for hours, had been running along beside the dogs. "Yes," the leader replied, "there is plenty of wood charred by last year's fire which will burn well."

In a few minutes the dogs were unharnessed and rolling on their backs in the snow. One of them began licking his tired feet, while the others nosed about for a rabbit or a ptarmigan (a type of small bird).

While James Evans unpacked the sled, the Indians chopped down a few charred tree-trunks, lit a bright crackling fire, and with their snow-shoes shoveled up a great bank of snow on three sides of it. Soon the water in their kettles was boiling, and the stiff frozen fish placed near the fire was thawed, cooked, and thrown to the hungry dogs. Next the men warmed up their own meal of tea and pemmican (flattened, dried buffalo meat) and tried to eat it before it froze solid again in the bitter cold air.

When supper was over, both dogs and men crawled close to the fire. The men talked about plans for the next day's trip, had a time of prayer and singing to the Lord, then prepared themselves for bed. They spread buffalo

skins and blankets, and wound them round themselves several times, covering even their heads, to protect themselves from getting frost-bite. Then they lay down with their feet to the fire, sheltered from the bitter wind by the bank of snow.

Each day they traveled further north in the bitter cold. Why were the men risking their lives like this? To take the good news of Jesus to the Cree Indians. How would they have a chance to trust in Jesus as their Savior if no one braved the snow and cold to tell them?

After weeks of travel, the men arrived at the Cree village. Many of these Indians had never seen a Paleface—a white-skinned man—before, and they crowded around in wonder.

“Hello, my friends,” James Evans greeted them in the Cree language, “come gather around my camp-fire and I will tell you stories of Gitche Manito, the Mighty. He is the Great Spirit who loves all people. He sent His Son Jesus into the world to tell about Gitche Manito and to pay for the sins of all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him.”

The Crees listened to Evans for hours as he told them stories of Jesus. Slowly, they began to understand.

“It is not enough for me to tell these Cree Indians about Gitche Manito and His Son Jesus who made the way for people to know Him,” James Evans decided. “I can only be with them for a few months at a time. These people need to be able to read about Him by themselves. Then, they can keep learning more about Him, even when I am gone. But how?” he wondered.

“There are so many problems! I hardly know how to speak Cree and they have no written language—not even an alphabet! What am I to do?”

For many days Evans thought and prayed for a plan. At last one came to mind. “Indian hunters draw pictures on a piece of bark showing a buffalo being captured or a fish being caught. Maybe I can make simple pictures that stand for sounds and put them together to make words,” he decided.

So James Evans thought up a simple picture for every sound in the Cree language. Then he gathered together Chief Grey Moose and some of the other Cree men to begin teaching them.

James Evans used the end of a charred stick to make the sound pictures on a large board made of birch-bark. “This sign stands for ‘ma’” he said as he pointed to the sound

picture on the board. Will you all say ‘ma?’” he asked.

“Ma,” they replied.

“This sign stands for ‘nee’” as he made that symbol on the board. “Will you all say ‘nee?’” James Evans asked them.

“Nee,” they all repeated.

“Now say ‘Ma-nee’ as I point to the signs.”

“Ma-nee,” they replied.

“This is the sign for ‘to’” “Will you all say ‘to?’”

“To,” came the answer.

“Let’s say them together, as I point to them?”

“Ma-nee-to,” they said, repeating the sounds slowly.

“Maneeto!” they exclaimed excitedly. The birch bark is talking. It is saying words! Can the birch bark say other words?” they asked.

“Oh yes,” said Evans, “it can speak many things. I will teach you read all the words of Gitche Manito the Mighty, yourself,” Evans told them.

The Cree were so excited! Soon so many students joined his class that he couldn’t teach them all from his picture board. “I must print part of the Bible for them to learn to read from,” Evans decided. “But how? I have no paper. Maybe I could make paper out of birch bark,” he thought. And maybe I could make lead stamps for each of the sound pictures to print them on the birch bark.”

So that’s what they did. The squaws beat birch bark strips into thin pieces and cut them into sheets of paper. A Cree Indian named Cutshanoquin took lead from Evans’ tea chests and melted it down. James carefully poured it into clay molds and made stamps for each sound picture. Then he began the work of stamping out the words of one of the Gospels into the little symbols that made up the Cree’s new written language on the birch bark paper.

After months of hard work, Evans finished printing out one of the Gospels (one of the books of the Bible that tells the story of Jesus) in the Cree language. How happy the Cree were to read the story of how Jesus, God’s Son, came to make the way to God, for all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior!

Not long after Evans finished the gospel, he had to leave the Crees and go back south to his family in Manitoba. He was sad to leave them, but was thankful to be able to leave the Cree a “talking book” about Gitche Manito the Mighty and His Son, Jesus that would tell them how they could turn from their sins and trust in Him as Savior long after he

was gone.

And what happened to the Cree? Did they keep their talking book and read it? Did they turn and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? No one knew for thirty years. Then one day, a dozen Indians came to the door of a missionary who had come to live in Canada. He had seen many Indians in his day, but never ones like.

this. Where had they come from? What did they want?

They held out a thick book, with covers made of reindeer skin and with pages made of birch-bark, thick like coarse brown paper. On it, in faded ink, were large, clumsily made letters of the Cree language. It was the very book that James Evans made for them!

“We have traveled thirteen days to find you,” they told the missionary. Long ago a man came and made this book and taught our people how to read it,’ they told him, “but there much we don’t understand. We have come to find a teacher, and we have come to ask you to show us its meaning and to send us a teacher.”

Overjoyed the missionary answered, “Yes, of course, I will teach you. Come, my friends, sit by my fire,” he said to them, “and I will tell you about Gitche Manito the Mighty and His Son, Jesus, that you might turn from your sins and trust in Him as Savior,” just as James Evans had thirty years earlier.

Our Bible Truth is: We Must Trust Him as Our Savior and Obey Him as Our Lord

Our Bible Verse is Romans 10: 9-10:

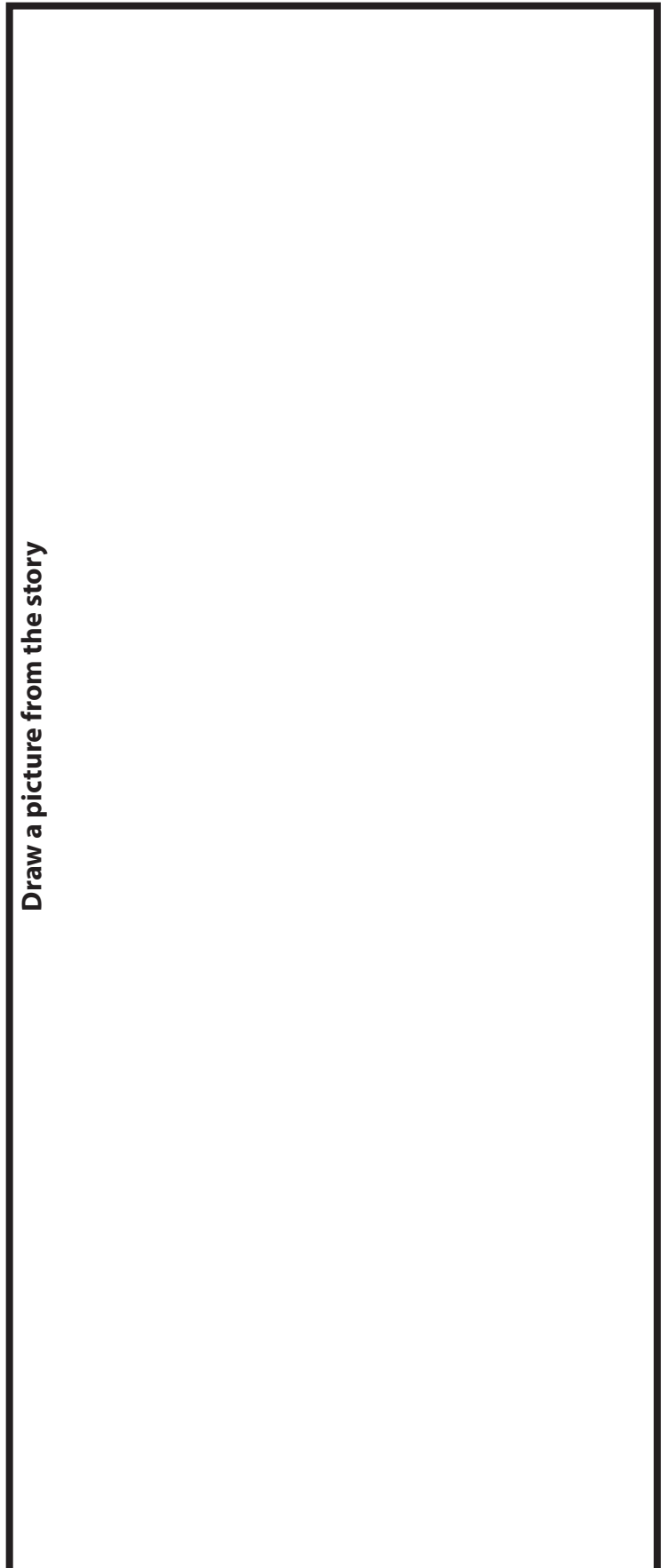
“...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.”

Can you imagine making so many sacrifices for someone to hear about Jesus? James Evans was willing to make them because he knew it was worth any sacrifice to bring the good news of Jesus to people who had never heard. He wanted them to be able to confess with their mouths and believe in their hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead so that they could be saved.

Let’s praise our God who saves for raising up men so like James Evans and his Indian friends to be willing to make great sacrifices to tell others how they can trust in Jesus as their Savior. Let’s ask Him to work in our hearts that we might trust Jesus as our Savior. And let’s ask Him to raise

more people—people like you and me, even—who would be willing to make great sacrifices so that others might hear about Jesus.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Trusting in Jesus as our own Savior is a wonderful work that God does by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of God's people. We can ask God to do this work in our heart.
 Answer: True! God delights to answer this prayer.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who had the tea chests? How did he make them talk?
 Answer: James Evans. He used the lead from the tea chests to make letters for printing part of the Bible in the Cree language.

b. Who did he want them to talk to? What did he want them to say to these people?
 Answer: The Cree Indians. James Evans left them this Bible portion to be able to know the good news of Jesus, trust in Him as their Savior and be saved. He wanted them to begin to live for God.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 10:9-10
 "...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."
 Answers: you; me; going; comes.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory
PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 10

Verse 2
 O perfect redemption,
 the purchase of blood,
 To ev'ry believer
 the promise of God;
 The vilest offender
 who truly believes,
 That moment from Jesus
 a pardon receives.

Refrain:
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
 Let the earth hear His voice!
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
 Let the people rejoice!
 O come to the Father,
 thro' Jesus the Son,
 And give Him the glory,
 great things He hath done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

Everyone who trusts in Jesus as their own Savior knows God's forgiveness for their sins. Jesus has perfectly redeemed them. That is, He has paid for all their sins so they know God and enjoy eternal life with Him. How God's people praise God for sending Jesus to make the way for them to come to Him! If we trust in Jesus like this—even if we have been the worst of sinners—we can know that God will save us, just as He has promised. This will cause us to want to give God the glory for the great things He has done for us, too!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Giver of Strength and Courage to Your people that they might make great sacrifices to tell others about You.

C God, we confess that many times we do not think much about reading and understanding the Bible, even though we have it in our own language. We all need Savior!

T God, we thank You for caring that people even in faraway places hear the good news of salvation. Thank You for sending You people to these places to tell them how to be saved.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send out more people to faraway places, even today, that everyone might hear the good news of Jesus and be saved.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If You Confess with Your Mouth
PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 11

If you confess, with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"
 And believe in your heart,
 That God raised Him from the dead,
 You will be save, you will be saved.
 For it is with your heart, that you believe and are justified.

If you confess, with your mouth,
 "Jesus is Lord,"
 And believe in your heart,
 That God raised Him from the dead,
 You will be save, you will be saved.
 For it is with your mouth, that you confess and are saved.
 Romans Ten: nine and ten.
 Words: Romans 10:9-10, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

To believe something in your heart is to think that something is true. To confess something is to others is to tell them what you think is true. Christians are those who believe in their hearts that Jesus is the Son of God, who died on the cross to save God's people from their sins. They believe that He rose from the dead on the third day, showing that He had beaten sin and death for them. They love telling this good news to others that they might believe and be saved,

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

**Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:
How Can We Be Saved?**

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

We Must Trust Jesus as Our Savior and Obey Him as Our Lord.

It isn't enough to simply think that Jesus is the only way to God. We need to trust in Jesus as our own Savior; and, we need to begin a new life of living for Him.

We need to confess to God that we are a sinner and ask His forgiveness for our sins. We need to believe that Jesus suffered and died on the cross as the perfect payment for our sins; and that three days later, He rose from the dead in victory over death. We need to turn our lives over to Him, asking Him to help us to love and live for Him in everything we do.

Trusting in Jesus to be our Savior is a wonderful work that God does by His Holy Spirit in the hearts of His people. He delights for us to ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to do this work in our heart.

When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, we also accept Him as our Lord. "Lord" is an old word used in the Bible that we don't use much anymore. It means someone who is in charge and who we are to obey. The sign of someone who truly trusts in Jesus as their Savior, is whether they also are trying to live to please God.

God's people want to obey Him in everything they do, but they can't do that on their own--and they don't have to. God gives believers His Holy Spirit to live inside them and help them to grow in love and in obedience to Him. God always gives us what we need to be His people, if we but ask!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Romans 10:9-10, NIV 1984

"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

CASE STORY

Joshua 1-6; Exodus 13-14; Numbers 21; Deuteronomy 2-3; Psalm 87:4; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25

Our story is: The Case of the Red Rope Ransom.

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

1. Who put out the red rope? Why? Who was supposed to see it?
2. A ransom is something paid to free someone. How was the owner of the red rope ransomed--paid and freed twice? How was she used as part of God's plan to ransom many?

This story takes place in Old Testament times about 1400 years before Jesus lived on earth.

The city of Jericho was on alert. Its soldiers stood watch from its towering stone walls. The Israelites had set up camp not from away and all of Jericho was terrified. Who hadn't heard of the mighty power of the LORD, their God? He had rescued them from the powerful Egyptians. He had defeated their enemies, the king of Bashan and Sihon. Could He not also defeat them? the people of Jericho thought.

How much more scared the people of Jericho would have been, if they had known that Joshua, the leader of the Israelites was preparing the Israelites to march on their city very soon. A matter of fact, he would be sending out spies to check out Jericho that very day!

"Get the people ready," Joshua order his officers. "In three days, we will cross the Jordan River and take the land the LORD your God promised us." Then Joshua called two of his best soldiers to his tent. "Go and spy out the land across the Jordan River, especially Jericho," he ordered them. "Report to me what you see. Be careful! This is a dangerous mission, but the LORD will be with you."

So the spies crossed the Jordan, crept through the countryside. "What a large spring of water, what good fields of wheat. Look at the dates on those trees! The pastures are full of sheep and cows. There will be plenty of good supplies for our people!" the spies told each other.

At last they made it to Jericho. Soldiers lined the walls above, peering down on everyone entering through the city gates; yet somehow, the spies slipped through the gates unnoticed. Through the streets the they crept, taking note of everything they saw.

What a city Jericho was! About two thousand people lived inside its safe walls-- twenty-five feet high and

thick. Statues to Yerach, the moon god reminded the spies of the awful god these people worshiped and trusted for protection. Oh, what terrible sacrifices were made to this idol, this fake god! Yet soon, the LORD would lead the Israelites in victory over Jericho and all would see that it was the LORD, not Yerach, who is God in heaven above and on the earth below. The spies looked forward to that day!

The spies learned many things to tell Joshua about Jericho that day. But now, the sun was setting. Soon, the city gates would be shut. Yet hurry as they did, they were too late. The gates shut. They would have to hide in the city for the night. But where?

"Where might two weary travelers stay?" they asked.

"The house of Rahab" they were told. "Her house is one of the ones built into the wall."

The spies quickly made their way to her house, hoping they were safe. But they were not! They had been watched all day and word reached the king of Jericho: "Israel spies have been in Jericho all day. They are now at Rahab's house. What do you want us to do to them?" the soldiers asked the king.

"Tell Rahab to give up the spies! Arrest them and kill them!" the king answered.

But Rahab was making plans of her own. "I know that you are Israelite spies and you have been watched all day," she told the spies. "You must hide. Come up to the roof, quickly! We'll talk more when danger has passed." Rahab led the men to her roof and hid them under the huge bundles of flax she had laid out to dry.

"Bang! Bang!" The soldiers were soon at Rahab's door. "Rahab! We have a message for you from the king. Give us the men staying at your house. They are spies," they demanded.

"Yes, the men came, but I didn't know where they had come from," Rahab replied. "At sunset, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know which way they went. Go quickly. You may catch up with them," she lied.

The soldiers believed Rahab and left the city, in search of the spies.

When the soldiers left, Rahab went to the spies and said, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you. Everyone is so afraid because they have heard of the mighty power of the LORD, your God who is with you," she told them.

"He is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now

please promise that you will show kindness to me because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare me and my family when you come to take our city," she asked.

"Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will spare your lives when we take the city." So Rahab let them down by a rope through the window.

"Go to the hills and hide there three days until the soldiers return, and then go back to your camp," she told them.

"If you want us to keep this promise, you must tie this scarlet cord in your window," the spied told Rahab. "And make sure your whole family is in your house. It will be the only place where they will be safe."

Rahab agreed. She sent the spies away and tied the scarlet cord in the window.

The spies stayed in the hills for three days, then went back across the Jordan River to give Joshua their report: "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are terrified because of us." They know that they can never stand against us and our great God, the LORD, for He is God in heaven above and on the earth below," they told him.

And the people of Jericho were right. Nothing could stand against the LORD. Seventeen days later, the Israelites stood before the high walls of Jericho. The priests sounded the trumpet blast, and Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!"

When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and the walls fell down by the LORD's power. The Israelites charged in and took the city. All of Jericho was destroyed that day. Nothing was left, except for Rahab and her family, tucked safely away in her house with the scarlet cord in the window.

Did you ever wonder what happened to Rahab after Jericho was destroyed? The Bible tells us that Rahab turned away from worshipping Yerach, the moon god, and turned to worship the LORD. Yes, Rahab became one of God's people! The LORD gave her a good Israelite husband of her very own and so honored her that He made her the great grandmother of King David and even the great, great, great, great, great, great etc. grandmother of none other than Jesus, Himself!

Our Bible Truth Is: We Must Trust Him as Our Savior and Obey Him as Our Lord

Our Bible Verse is Romans 10: 9-10:

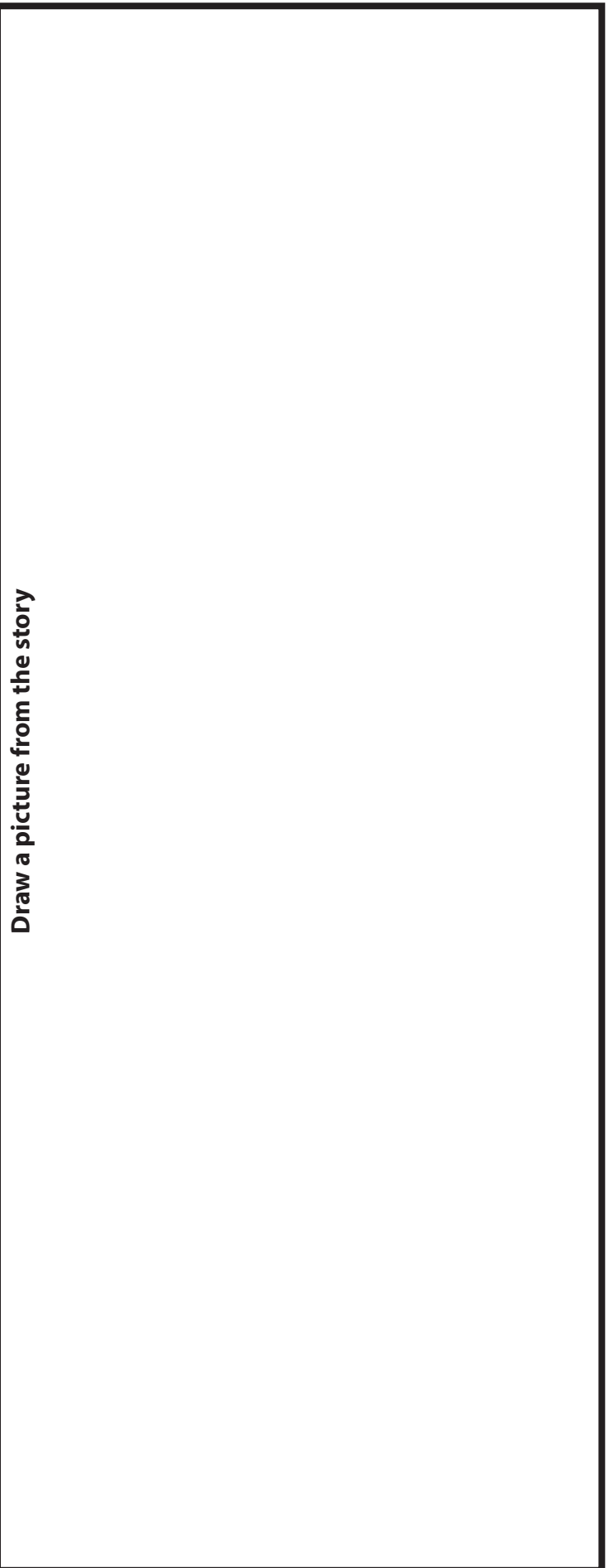
"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

Like all the people who believed in the LORD before Jesus came, Rahab did not know Jesus to trust Him as her Savior. But the Bible tells us that she and others like her trusted in the promises of God and looked forward in faith to the day when He would send a Savior to save them from their sins. The LORD accepted their faith in Him and saved them.

How much easier it is for you and me! We do not have to look forward in faith that the Lord would send a Savior. We know that He has already sent a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us praise God for sending us His Son to be Savior to all, like Rahab, who turn from their sins and trust in Him. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust in Him, too.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

As sinners, we would be without hope, if it weren't for God sending Jesus to save us. He promises to save all who confess and turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.
Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Light for the Unlikely? How did he try to cover up his sin?

Answer: David. He had Bathsheba's husband killed in battle to get rid of him.

b. Who knew about his sin and prompted him to confess it? How did God respond to this secret sinner's confession to Him?

Answer: The LORD knew. He used Nathan the prophet to help David see his sins and turn away from them. The LORD forgave David when he confessed his sins.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 10:9-10

"...if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."

Answers: rooms; place; way; except.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Savior of Your people from every nation.

C God, we confess that like the people of Jericho, we have all rebelled against God. We need to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

T God, we thank You for being so merciful to sinners who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, just like You saved Rahab.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 10

Verse 2

O perfect redemption,
the purchase of blood,
To ev'ry believer
the promise of God;
The vilest offender
who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus
a pardon receives.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father,
thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory,
great things He hath done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

Everyone who trusts in Jesus as their own Savior knows God's forgiveness for their sins. Jesus has perfectly redeemed them. That is, He has paid for all their sins so they know God and enjoy eternal life with Him. How God's people praise God for sending Jesus to make the way for them to come to Him! If we trust in Jesus like this—even if we have been the worst of sinners—we can know that God will save us, just as He has promised. This will cause us to want to give God the glory for the great things He has done for us, too!

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If You Confess with Your Mouth

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 11

If you confess, with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,"
And believe in your heart,
That God raised Him from the dead,
You will be save, you will be saved.
For it is with your heart, that you believe and are justified.

If you confess, with your mouth,
"Jesus is Lord,"
And believe in your heart,
That God raised Him from the dead,
You will be save, you will be saved.
For it is with your mouth, that you confess and are saved.

Romans Ten: nine and ten.

Words: Romans 10:9-10, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

To believe something in your heart is to think that something is true. To confess something to others is to tell them what you think is true. Christians are those who believe in their hearts that Jesus is the Son of God, who died on the cross to save God's people from their sins. They believe that He rose from the dead on the third day, showing that He had beaten sin and death for them. They love telling this good news to others that they might believe and be saved,

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

The Holy Spirit Changes Our Hearts So We Can Be Saved

Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, each of us have been born with a spirit dead with sin. That means that on our own, none of us can know God or choose to live for Him, just like a dead person can't bring his body back to life.

But God can do what we cannot do. He can bring dead hearts to life, so that we can know Him and want to live for Him. He does this by sending His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. As we hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit can help us see our sins and help us want to turn away from them. He gives us faith in God. Faith to trust that Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose from the dead in victory. He gives us a new heart that can know God and want to live for Him.

Jesus called this being "born again, born of God." He calls this being born again because this change in heart is so radical that God actual makes us into a new creation--a brand-new person on the inside! He calls this being born of God, because this change comes from God. And with it, He makes us a part of His family forever.

We can ask God's Holy Spirit to work in our hearts like this. God delights to answer this prayer. He loves for sinners to ask Him to change them and make them into His people.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Titus 3:4-7, NIV 1984

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

CASE STORY

Psalm 137:1-6; Ezekiel 36, 37:15-28; John 2:12-3:21

Our story is called:

The Case of the Stony Hearts.

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

1. Who had stony hearts? What was stony about them?
2. What should their hearts be like? Who alone could change them? How?

This story begins in Old Testament times, about 600 years before Jesus lived here on earth.

Some Babylonians had gone down to the Euphrates River to enjoy the shade of the poplar trees that grew along its banks. As usual, they brought their slaves along to serve them. Babylonian slaves came from many nations--all of them captured in war and brought back to Babylon to serve as slaves. But these particular slaves were Israelites. And the Babylonians, looking for some new entertainment, asked them to sing some songs from their homeland.

"Enough songs of Babylon!" the Babylonians said. "Take out your harps and play us a tune, you Israelites. Sing us a new, joyful song from Jerusalem, of Zion, your home," they ordered.

"How can we sing to you of Zion when it lies in ruins, destroyed by your soldiers!" the Israelites said. They hung their harps upon the branches of the poplar trees, sat down by the Euphrates and wept.

How sad the Israelite slaves were! They knew that they had sinned against the LORD and not turned back to Him when He warned them to stop sinning. He had told them that the Babylonians would destroy them if they did not repent. They refused, and so, the great armies of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had swept into their land and destroyed it... and all of Jerusalem with it. Gone were their lands, their houses, their cities, their Temple. The Babylonians soldiers had bound the people in chains and made them their slaves.

If only their hearts had not been so dirty with sin and so hard as stone! If only they had loved and obeyed God as He desired! Then none of this would have happened! "What can we do to be rid of these sad times brought by our sin? What can we do to bring back the good days in the kingdom of Israel?" the Israelites wondered.

The LORD saw how sad His people were and He sent His prophet Ezekiel with a comforting promise for them: "You

will have to stay in Babylon for seventy years, as I told you before. But after that, I will bring you out of Babylon and take you back home so you can rebuild Jerusalem and the kingdom of Israel," the LORD told them.

"And that is not all. I am going to do something even better than give you back the kingdom of Israel as it was!" the LORD promised. "I am going to truly bring an end to your sad times brought on by your sin. Like water washes dirty things clean, I am going to clean your hearts of sin. I am going to change them so that they will no longer be hard and disobedient like stone. I will make your hearts alive again by putting my Spirit inside you! Then I, Myself, will move you to love Me and follow My ways," He told them. "And one day, I am going to send My Messiah to make the whole earth My perfect Kingdom forever. Then you will be My beloved people and I will be your beloved God."

The Israelites took comfort in the LORD's promises and waited...for long seventy years. And sure enough, God kept His promise to them. On the very day after the seventy years were finished, they were freed.

How the Israelites rejoiced to be going back home to Jerusalem! Yet they wondered, "Would the LORD fulfill His other promises--when He would change their sad times brought by their sin; and send the Messiah to bring His Kingdom forever?"

Six hundred years passed and still the Israelites waited to see the LORD answer these promises. The Babylonians were long gone, but now a new enemy --the Romans--had come and taken over the kingdom of Israel and brought new sinful, sad times.

"Now would be a good time for the Messiah to bring God's Kingdom," the people of Israel thought. "He would get rid of the Romans and set up His kingdom forever," they hoped. "What can we do to be rid of these sinful, sad times? What can we do to bring the Kingdom of God?" they wondered.

"Perhaps there is a reason God hasn't sent the Messiah to rescue us," thought the Pharisees. "Perhaps our hearts and lives are too dirty because we don't keep His laws. Perhaps if we keep all of God's laws and are really good, then that would bring an end to these sinful, sad times and bring God's kingdom sooner," they hoped. But as hard as they tried, they couldn't keep the God's laws just right. No. They couldn't bring the Messiah by their own good deeds.

They had to wait for God to fulfill His promises.

And so He did. At the right time, Jesus came. He began to do amazing miracles and to tell everyone that the Kingdom of God was near. He even stormed into the Temple area and cleared it of men who were making money off of people come to worship the LORD. "This is God's house," Jesus said. "It's to be a house of prayer; not a thieves' den as you have made it!"

Everyone began talking about Jesus and the things He did. "Who has ever spoken like this or has done miracles like this? Who would dare clear the Temple, as if it was his? Could this be the Messiah?" some people wondered.

But the Pharisees and others said, "Who does Jesus think he is? He does amazing things and talks like he is something special, but he's no Messiah! When the Messiah comes, He will appear suddenly and destroy all our enemies. He will set up God's kingdom with great power. We are the teachers of the law and we know about these things," they said.

One Pharisee named Nicodemus wasn't so sure. He had spent hours reading the Bible and knew all the promises about the Messiah—even the ones the LORD had given the Israelites through Ezekiel so many years before. Nicodemus heard what Jesus said and saw what Jesus did. And he began to wonder just who Jesus was. There was something about Jesus that made Nicodemus want to know more. "Perhaps Jesus does know how to bring an end to these sinful, sad times," thought Nicodemus. "Perhaps He knows how to bring the Kingdom of God."

So late one night Nicodemus went through the streets of Jerusalem to talk with Jesus. "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could do the miracles you do if God weren't with him," Nicodemus said to Jesus.

"No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again, born of God," Jesus answered him.

"I thought the kingdom of God was for the people of Israel who kept God's laws. What could this mean to be born again?" Nicodemus thought. "How can a man be born when he is old?" he asked Jesus.

"No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit," Jesus replied. "But I'm not talking about your body being born like a baby again. I'm talking about your spirit, your heart. You can only enter God's Kingdom if God's Spirit has given new life to your spirit,"

He explained. "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" Jesus continued. "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit. No one can see the Holy Spirit, but it is He who works in the hearts of people as He pleases, changing them. He's the one who brings an end to sad, sinful times by working in their hearts. He makes them able to enter the Kingdom of God."

This was all so new to Nicodemus! "How can this be?" he asked Jesus.

"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and you don't understand these things? But I have even more to tell you. I am God's Son, the Messiah and I have come to bring God's Kingdom. But it won't be by powerfully overthrowing the Romans, as so many think. It will be by being lifted up on a cross and dying for God's people. For God so loved the world that He gave Me, His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Me shall not die, but have eternal life--life in God's Kingdom forever!" Jesus explained.

Nicodemus may have left that night with more questions than he came. Jesus' answers surprised him. If only he would remember the promises God gave the people of Israel through Ezekiel long ago! That night Jesus was telling him that at last God was fulfilling those promises. Jesus would die for God's peoples' sins. By His Holy Spirit, He would wash away their sins and change our hearts by filling them with His Spirit. This was how God would bring an end to the sinful, sad times and bring in the Kingdom of God--in the hearts of His people.

Our Bible Truth is:

The Holy Spirit Brings Us to God

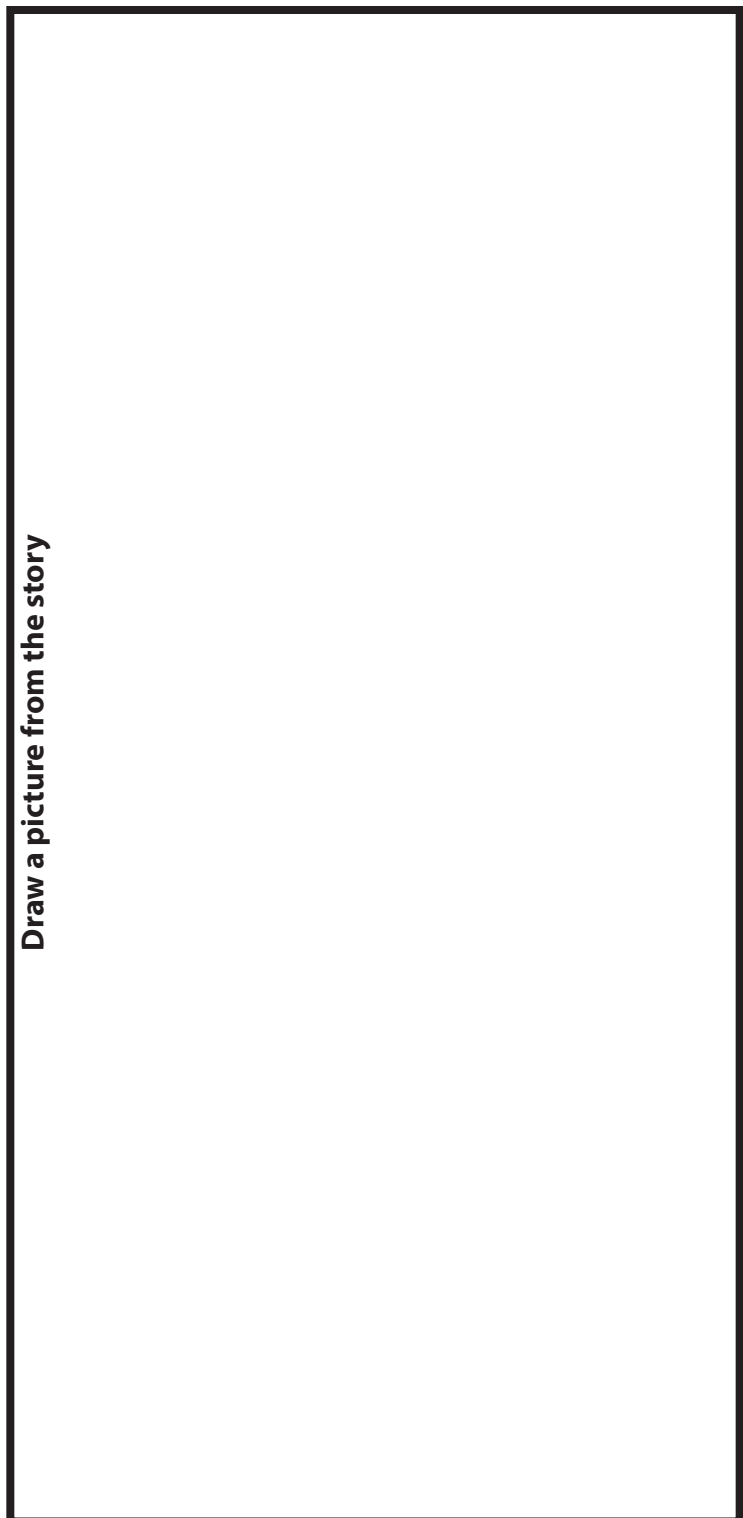
Our Bible Verse is: Titus 3:4-7

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

What happened to Nicodemus? Did he ever experience the spiritual birth of the Holy Spirit in his heart and was saved? We don't know for sure. We do know, though, that it was Nicodemus who stood up for Jesus against the other

Pharisees and priests when they wanted to have Him arrested and killed without even a trial. And it was Nicodemus who bought the seventy pounds of spices and helped to bury Jesus after He was crucified. Some say that after Jesus rose from the dead, Nicodemus did become a Christian and was baptized by Peter and John.

It will not be until heaven, in the Kingdom of God, when all of God's people are gathered to worship the Lord Jesus around His throne that we will know for sure



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, each of us has been born with a spirit dead with sin. None of us can know God or choose to live for Him on our own....but God by His Holy Spirit can bring our hearts to life! He can do what we cannot do on our own.

Answer: True! He delights to do this when we ask Him!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who had stony hearts? What was stony about them?

Answer: The people of Israel. Stones are hard and lifeless. The hearts of the people of Israel were hard and lifeless to God and His good laws.

b. What should their hearts be like? Who alone could change them? How?

Answer: Their hearts were meant to be full of love for God and His good laws. God alone could change them. He promised to change them by His Holy Spirit.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

Titus 3:4-7

"But when the kindness and love of God our ___ appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his ___. He saved us through the washing of ___ and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of ___"

Answers: Savior; mercy; rebirth; eternal life.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 12,13

Verse 1

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found.
Was blind but now I see.

Verse 2

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell

We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God's laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them "sight" to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Great Builder of the Church, Your people.

C God, we confess that like all people, we have chosen to rebel against You. Our hearts, like everyone else, are ugly and broken with sin. We cannot worship You, the one, true God as You created us to, unless You work in our hearts. We need a Savior! We need the Holy Spirit to work inside of us!

T God, we thank You for choosing to make Your people into the beautiful Church. Thank You for sending Jesus to save Your people and for sending Your Holy Spirit to live inside them, encouraging them.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins, trust Jesus as our own Savior, and be Your people. Send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we might know and love You. Keep strengthening Your people to go out and tell all peoples about You that many more might be saved.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

He Saved Us

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 14

He saved us, he saved us,
Through the washing of re-birth
And renewal by the Spirit.
He saved us, he saved us,
Through the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit whom he poured out,
On us generously,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
The Holy Spirit whom he poured out,
On us through Jesus Christ.

Words adapted from Titus 3:4-7 Constance Dever © 2011

We could never please God with our own good works. Only through Jesus' perfect life offered up in the place of sinners can we be saved. And what a salvation it is! God, Himself, sends His Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of His people. He gives them the gift of faith. He helps them turn away from their sins. He makes them clean of their sins and all new on the inside. This is how we become God's people--His heirs, that is, His children who will receive eternal life with Him forever.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

The Holy Spirit Changes Our Hearts So We Can Be Saved

Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, each of us have been born with a spirit dead with sin. That means that on our own, none of us can know God or choose to live for Him, just like a dead person can't bring his body back to life.

But God can do what we cannot do. He can bring dead hearts to life, so that we can know Him and want to live for Him. He does this by sending His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. As we hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit can help us see our sins and help us want to turn away from them. He gives us faith in God. Faith to trust that Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose from the dead in victory. He gives us a new heart that can know God and want to live for Him.

Jesus called this being "born again, born of God." He calls this being born again because this change in heart is so radical that God actual makes us into a new creation--a brand-new person on the inside! He calls this being born of God, because this change comes from God. And with it, He makes us a part of His family forever.

We can ask God's Holy Spirit to work in our hearts like this. God delights to answer this prayer. He loves for sinners to ask Him to change them and make them into His people.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Titus 3:4-7, NIV 1984

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Scorpion House.

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

1. Why was it called the Scorpion House? Who lived there?
2. What did God use who lived there to show and to tell others? What did God begin to do in these other people?

This story is not in the Bible. It is a true story about God's people obeying Jesus' command to spread the good news of salvation to the whole world. It takes place in the 1880's in China.

China is a huge country with big, roaring rivers, tall, majestic mountains, and lush, green valleys. At the time when this story takes place, most of the many millions of Chinese people knew nothing about Jesus but worshiped idols and spirits instead. And that's why the two main people of our story—C.T. Studd and Priscilla Stewart—chose to leave their comfortable homes and families in England and Ireland and traveled thousands of miles away to China. Someone needed to tell these people about Jesus!

In a tiny mission house, way up the mighty Yangtze River in the little city of Ta-Ku-Tang, a small Chinese man named Pastor Shi stood reading from an opened book to the English man and Irish woman before him.

"Do you Charles, take Scilla to be your wedded wife.. to have and to hold...for better or for worse...in sickness and in health....?" the pastor asked the man.

"I do!" responded the English man who looked like a giant compared with tiny Pastor Shi.

"Scilla, do you take Charles to be your wedded husband... to have and to hold... for better or for worse..in sickness and in health...?" he then asked the woman.

"I do!" eagerly replied the lively, blond-haired, blue-eyed young Irish woman.

"I now pronounce you man and wife, Mr. and Mrs. C.T. Studd," Pastor Shi announced.

"And now together," Charles and Scilla added, "we want to make another vow: a vow to work together for Jesus. We promise to never hinder each other from serving Jesus however He might call! More than anything else we want the Chinese people to hear about Jesus and to be saved. We want them to know God's change of heart by the

power of His Holy Spirit.”

As soon as the wedding ceremony was over, Charles, Scilla and their friend, Miss Burroughes, set off with only five dollars and some bedding to start a brand-new mission outreach station in Lungang-Fu. All over China, people needed to hear about Jesus, but perhaps nowhere more than in Lungang-Fu. It was in the far north of China where no missionary had ever gone before. The trip to Lungang-Fu was far from a relaxing honeymoon! The newlyweds had to cross rushing rivers, hike narrow, dangerous mountain ledges, and slog through mud up to their knees.

And as difficult as the trip to Lungang-Fu was, life in that faraway city was even more difficult! The people of Lungang-Fu weren't happy to see Scilla, Charles and Miss Burroughes and certainly not eager to hear their message about Jesus. No one would even give them a house to live in, except for the one they thought was haunted by evil spirits.

CT, Priscilla and Miss Burroughes gladly took the house. They weren't worried about any evil spirits. They knew that the Lord was the only true God and He was more powerful than any evil spirit. But even so, the house was in terrible shape. It was old and run-down. Its beds made of old, uneven bricks and had thin mattresses with only inch of padding in them. Worst of all, the house was infested with lots of deadly scorpions!

If the house was miserable to live in, life in the village were even worse for them! As soon as people saw the Studds or Miss Burroughes, they would throw glass and bricks at them and would curse them saying: “You are foreigner trouble-makers! You aren't our people. You call our gods, idols. You tell our people to turn from them to worship your God. All of our problems are your fault because you make our gods unhappy and bring their anger down upon us. Go home!”

But CT, Priscilla and Miss Burroughes wouldn't go home. “We will stay right here in Lungang- Fu. These people have hard hearts full of sin, but the Holy Spirit can change them. We will pray for these people. And, perhaps if we keep on loving them, invite them into our house and let them see how God has worked in us, then they will begin to listen to our message.

And that is what they did. God blessed their prayers and their work. “There is something different about you and your God that is more than just that you are not Chinese.

What is it?” some Chinese people began to ask.

“Come to our house and we will tell you,” they said.

So the Studds started holding little meetings for anyone interested. “Our God is the one true God who loved the sinful people of the world so much that He sent His only Son Jesus to die for the sins of all who believe in Him,” they explained to the Chinese. “We are different because His Holy Spirit came to work in our hearts, giving us faith to believe in Jesus, cleansing our hearts of sin and filling them with His Holy Spirit so that we might know and love God. You can know this one true God, too. He will cleanse your heart and fill you with His Spirit, too.”

After one of these meetings, a Chinese man came up to CT and said, “I'm a murderer, an adulterer and drug addict. I've broken all the laws of my village, over and over again. Your God can't do anything to change me. I'm too bad!”

“You're wrong!” the Studds told the man. “There is no one who has sinned too much to be forgiven by Jesus. There is no heart too full of sin that the Holy Spirit can't cleanse it and make it new. You, too, can be one of His people, if you will turn away from your sin and trust in Jesus as your Savior,” they promised him.

The man heard these wonderful words of hope and believed. The Holy Spirit changed his heart and he became one of God's people. He was a changed man!

“What good news this is! It is as you said!” the man exclaimed. “I am a new person. I must go at once back to my village where I did all those evil things and tell them about Jesus and the work of Holy Spirit in my heart.” And so he did.

Crowds came to hear what he had to say. “You know what an awful man I have been. You know what terrible things I've done. I thought there could never be any change for me. But I'm here to tell you about the true God who offers salvation through His Son Jesus. He changed my heart by His Holy Spirit. I can't believe in Him and now he has made me like a new person.”

The people listened to the man and said, “This is no foreign trouble-maker speaking! We know this man and all the wicked things he used to do. He is truly a changed man. We must know more!” they exclaimed.

But the village leaders didn't want the people to know more. They arrested the man and beat him with a bamboo cane 2000 times and left him for dead. “That will stop the talk about this foreign god!” they thought.

But it did not! The man hadn't died and as soon as he could walk again, he went back to the village and started telling them about Jesus again: "Come and let me tell you about the true God's salvation through Jesus. Let me tell you about the change of heart that He gives through the Holy Spirit," he told them again.

The village leaders were furious! They grabbed the man again and this time threw him in jail. But even in jail, the man found a way to shout the good news of Jesus through the cracks in the prison walls to the crowds that gathered outside his cell.

"There is no stopping this man. He causes problems even when we put him in jail. We might as well let him go," the village leaders decided and released the man. Soon many Chinese people became Christians. The Holy Spirit worked in their hearts as they heard this man's message and saw his changed life.

CT, Scilla and Miss Burroughes were overjoyed at how God had heard their prayers and answered them. They praised God for melting the stony, hard hearts of the Chinese people by His Holy Spirit and bringing them to faith in Jesus.

In a few years, bad health forced CT and Scilla to leave China completely and go back home to England. They were sad to go, but they knew that thanks to the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, they were leaving behind a little church of believers with such strong faith that no persecution could stop them.

Our Bible Truth is:
The Holy Spirit Brings Us to God
Our Bible Verse is Titus 3:4-7:

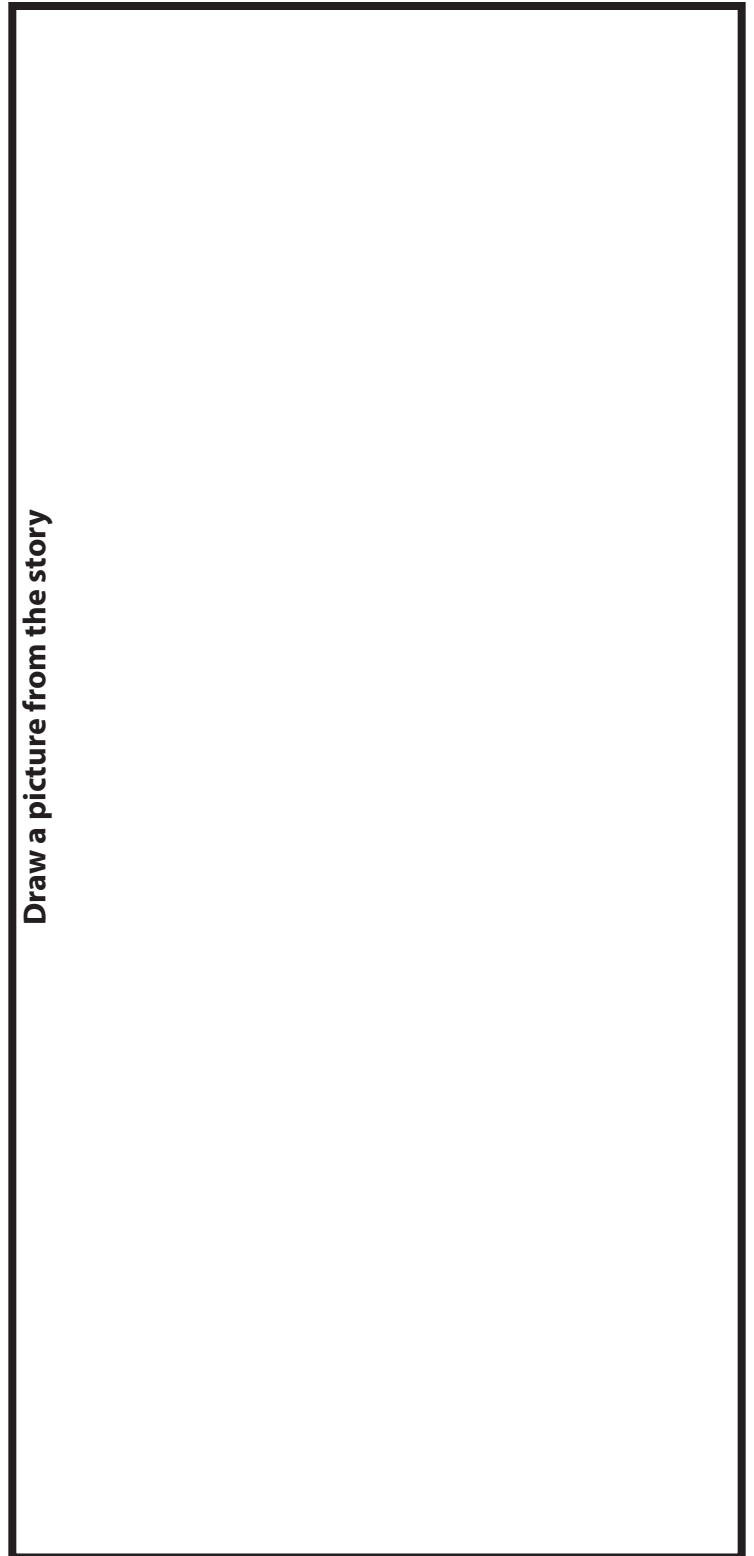
"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

How wonderful was the work the Lord did in the Chinese people through the Studds! Yet sadly, still today, many today in China still have not heard how they can be saved from their sins through Jesus.

Let's pray that God would send out more people to tell the Chinese people about salvation through Jesus. Let's pray that as they hear, that God's Holy Spirit would work

in their hearts and bring many Chinese to know Him. Let's pray that God would give courage to the Chinese Christians to keep on sharing about Jesus, even though they still might be arrested or suffer for it.

And let's ask God to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to maybe even send us to the Chinese people to tell them about Jesus, one day!



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: As we hear God’s Word, the Holy Spirit can help us see our sins and help us want to turn away from them. Answer: True! God delights to do this. Let’s ask Him to work like this in us today!</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Why was it called the Scorpion House? Who lived there? Answer: It was infested with scorpions. C.T. Studd, his wife ‘Scilla, and Miss Burroughes. b. What did God use who lived there to show and to tell others? What did God begin to do in these other people? Answer: The difference the Holy Spirit makes when He lives in our heart. As the Chinese saw the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the Studds and Miss Burroughes, they came to their house to hear more about God’ Word and salvation through Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit began to work in the house of the Chinese and bring them to faith in Jesus, too.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Titus 3:4-7 “But when the kindness and ___ of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things ___ had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the ___, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his ___, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.” Answers: love; we; Holy Spirit; grace.</p>

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Great Builder of the Church, Your people, from every tribe and nation, even tiny tribes in faraway places like Papua New Guinea.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we are not like the people of the neighboring tribe who were so hungry to worship You and hear Your Word that they built a church building, even before someone came to tell them. Many times we are lazy and do not care to think about You or read Your Word, the Bible.</p> <p>T God, we thank You for the great work You chose to do through C.T. Studd. Thank You for the many other missionaries who have gone out after seeing his example.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we might know and love You. Keep strengthening Your people to go out and tell all the peoples of the world about Jesus that they might be saved.</p>

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>Amazing Grace <i>PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 12,13</i></p> <p>Verse 1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found. Was blind but now I see.</p> <p>Verse 2 ‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell</p> <p>We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God’s laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them “sight” to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.</p>

BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p>He Saved Us <i>PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 14</i></p> <p>He saved us, he saved us, Through the washing of re-birth And renewal by the Spirit. He saved us, he saved us, Through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit whom he poured out, On us generously, Through Jesus Christ our Lord, The Holy Spirit whom he poured out, On us through Jesus Christ.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Words adapted from Titus 3:4-7 Constance Dever © 2011</p> <p>We could never please God with our own good works. Only through Jesus’ perfect life offered up in the place of sinners can we be saved. And what a salvation it is! God, Himself, sends His Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of His people. He gives them the gift of faith. He helps them turn away from their sins. He makes them clean of their sins and all new on the inside. This is how we become God’s people--His heirs, that is, His children who will receive eternal life with Him forever.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

The Holy Spirit Changes Our Hearts So We Can Be Saved

Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God, each of us have been born with a spirit dead with sin. That means that on our own, none of us can know God or choose to live for Him, just like a dead person can't bring his body back to life.

But God can do what we cannot do. He can bring dead hearts to life, so that we can know Him and want to live for Him. He does this by sending His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. As we hear God's Word, the Holy Spirit can help us see our sins and help us want to turn away from them. He gives us faith in God. Faith to trust that Jesus died on the cross for sinners and rose from the dead in victory. He gives us a new heart that can know God and want to live for Him.

Jesus called this being "born again, born of God." He calls this being born again because this change in heart is so radical that God actual makes us into a new creation--a brand-new person on the inside! He calls this being born of God, because this change comes from God. And with it, He makes us a part of His family forever.

We can ask God's Holy Spirit to work in our hearts like this. God delights to answer this prayer. He loves for sinners to ask Him to change them and make them into His people.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Titus 3:4-7, NIV 1984

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

CASE STORY

Acts 9

Our story is: The Case of the Surprising Sky.

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

1. What was surprising about the sky? Who saw the surprise? What happened to him after he saw it?
2. What did God change inside the man that was so surprising? How did He make this change?

This story takes place in New Testament times only a few years after Jesus rose from the dead and went back up to heaven. It starts out in the streets of Jerusalem, the beautiful capitol of Israel.

Bang! Bang! Bang! "In the name of the high priest Caiaphas, I command you to open up or I'll bust down the door!" ordered Saul.

The door opened Saul went in. He glared hatefully at the surprised men and women. "By the high priest's order, you are under arrest for blasphemy. You have dishonored the Lord's name by becoming followers of that fake Messiah, Jesus," he told the Jewish Christians.

"The Jewish people must stay pure in their worship of the Lord," Saul said. "Your blasphemy, your worship of Jesus, cannot be tolerated." Saul turned to the soldiers with him and said, "Seize them!" The temple soldiers grabbed the Christians and took them to prison.

Word of Saul's raids spread quickly all over Jerusalem. "What can we do?" exclaimed the other Jewish Christians. "There seems to be nothing to stop him! Saul has such a hard heart towards Jesus. He is convinced that Jesus is a fake Messiah and thinks that only by getting rid of us will Israel remain pure in their worship of the Lord," the believers exclaimed.

"We have no choice but to leave Jerusalem if we are to survive," others replied. So all the believers, except Jesus' original disciples left Jerusalem and scattered throughout Judea, Samaria, and beyond.

But to the horror of Saul and other Jewish leaders, this only made the problem worse! As Christians left Jerusalem and settled in new areas, they told more and more people the good news of Jesus. As the Christians told about Jesus, the Holy Spirit worked in the listeners' hearts and gave them faith to believe.

News of more and more Jews becoming Christians made its way to Saul. He was furious! He must do something to stamp out these Christians!

Saul went to the high priest, Caiaphas and said, "I have terrible news for you. The soldiers and I have put in jail almost all the Christians here in Jerusalem, but many have escaped to other parts of Judea and Samaria, and even as far as Damascus. These blasphemers are going into the synagogues and spreading their lies about Jesus to Jews and God-fearing Gentiles there," Saul told him. "I am especially worried about Damascus. There are three, large synagogues there and many thousands of Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. If they begin to preach about this fake Messiah there, many good Jews might be tricked into believing in Him, too," he complained to Caiaphas.

"To make things worse, Damascus is one of the most important cities on the trade route that goes from here all the way to Babylon," Saul continued. "If these Christians spread their lies to the hundreds of merchants passing through Damascus, soon this Jesus will have followers all over the world. We must get to Damascus quickly and crush those Christians!"

"I agree. What is your plan?" replied Caiaphas.

"Give me some soldiers and send me to Damascus, to hunt down the Christians, arrest them and bring them back here to put in jail," Saul replied.

"Done!" Caiaphas answered. "Be on your way quickly! Damascus is 175 miles away—a good week's walk—there is no time to lose."

"Yes, sir. I will do my job and return as quickly as I can," Saul promised him.

Soon Saul and his men were on their way. Saul was anxious to get there and stop those Christians! The Lord's worship must stay pure. The laws must be obeyed. The lies about this fake Messiah, Jesus, would end!. Saul would make sure of that...or would he? For as Saul and the soldiers neared Damascus, something completely unexpected happened. Something that would change Saul forever.

They were almost to Damascus, when suddenly a heavenly light shone down on Saul. He fell down to the ground and heard a voice say, "Saul, and heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but didn't see anyone. Saul got up

off the ground. He opened his eyes, but found he couldn't see anything. The soldiers took Saul by hand and led him to their lodgings at Judas' house in Damascus. For three days, Saul sat, blind and unwilling to eat or drink anything. What was happening to him?

A change was happening in Saul. Not only had he seen with his eyes and heard with his ears that Jesus really was the Messiah; but in Saul's heart, the Holy Spirit had begun to work. He was giving Saul the faith to believe in Jesus. He was cleansing Saul's heart of sin and filling it with true knowledge and love for God.

"How could this be?" Saul wondered. "I thought Jesus was a fake Messiah, but now He has shown me that He is no fake at all. I thought I was so good and righteous by being a Pharisee and by working so hard to get rid of the Christians. But now I know that I was the one being unrighteous, not them. I thought they were being disobedient and deceived by sinfulness. Now I know that I was the one being disobedient and deceived by my own sinfulness! This is awful! I have hated and killed many of the Lord's true people! I am the chief—the greatest—of sinners," Saul thought.

But even though Saul had done such terrible things, the Lord loved him. He hadn't spoken to him from heaven just to tell him to stop harming the Christians. He was calling Saul to be one of His followers and serve Him in great ways.

While Saul sat in darkness and the Holy Spirit worked in his heart, the Lord called in a vision to Ananias-- one of His disciples who lived in Damascus.

"Ananias!" the Lord said.

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

"Go to Judas' house on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight," the Lord said.

Ananias was scared to obey. "Lord, I've heard about this man and all the harm he has done to your people in Jerusalem. He's come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all your people," he prayed.

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I've chosen Saul to take the good news of salvation to both the Jews and the Gentiles (non-Jews). I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

So Ananias went to find Saul at Judas' house. He placed his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus,

who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

The Lord has made me a new person!" Saul exclaimed. "In His mercy He has given to me the gift of faith to hear and believe the truth, even though I had been so disobedient and deceived. He saved me not because of good, righteous things I had done but because of His mercy. Through Jesus Christ my Savior, He has poured out on me His Holy Spirit generously on me, cleansing my spirit of sin and making my heart new by filling it with the Holy Spirit. I have been the chief of sinners, but now the Lord Jesus has forgiven me to show to others how great His mercy is. Everything else is nothing compared with knowing Jesus. I will spend the rest of my days praising His name and telling others about the glorious riches of knowing Him," Saul decided.

Saul spent several days with the Christians in Damascus. At once he started preaching in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were shocked and asked, "Isn't he the man who was putting the Christians in jail in Jerusalem? Didn't he come here to arrest more Christians and take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

But that was the old Saul, who was gone. Now there was the new Saul, completely changed by the Holy Spirit working in his heart. And this Saul grew more and more powerful by the Holy Spirit. And he proved to the Jews living in Damascus that Jesus is the Christ.

Our Bible Truth Is:

The Holy Spirit Brings Us to God

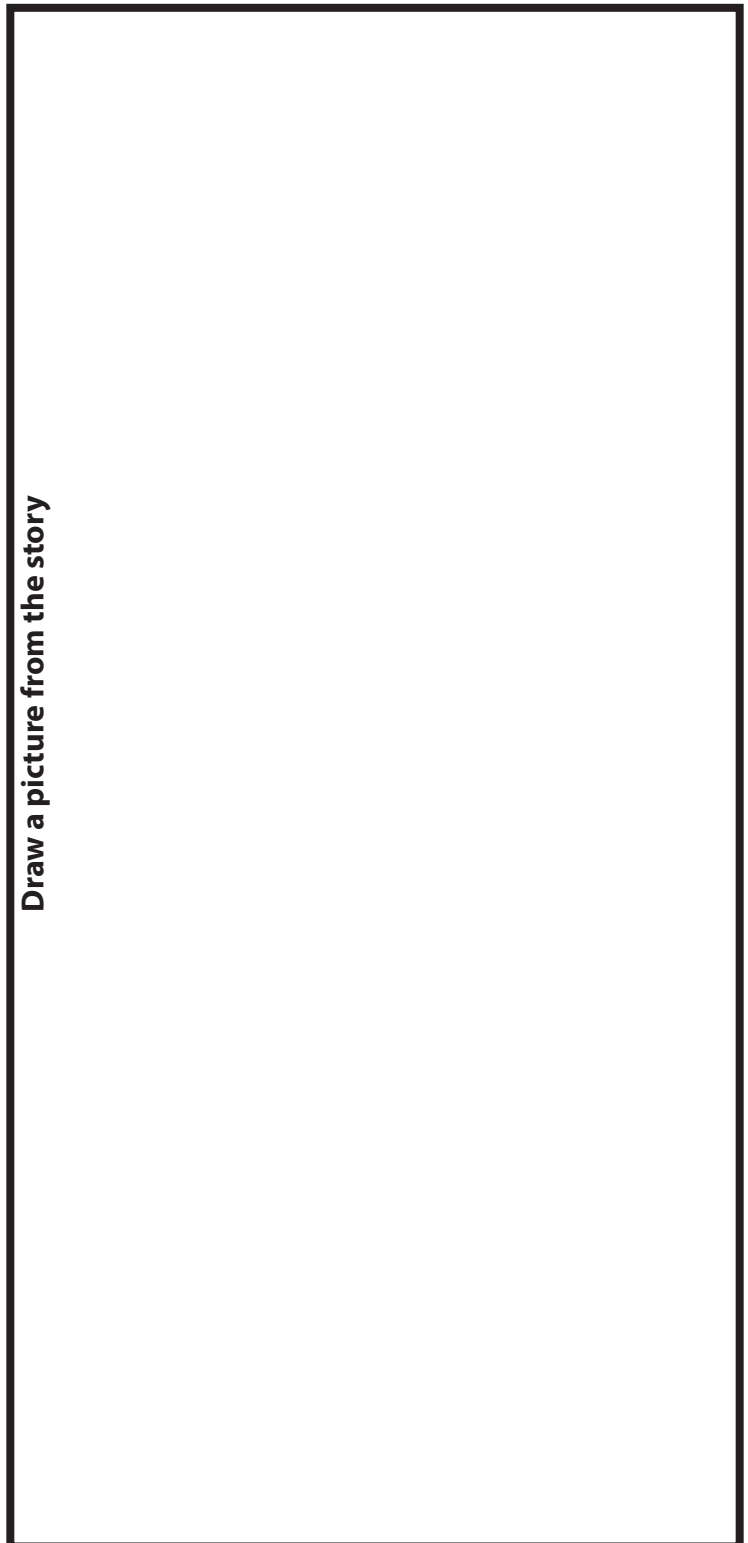
Our Bible Verse is Titus 3:4-7:

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

Saul was completely changed man. The old Saul was gone, the new Saul had come. The Lord even gave Saul a new name--Paul--as a picture of the great work He had done in his heart. It was by the Holy Spirit that Saul's hard,

hard heart was changed and he believed in Jesus.

Let's praise God for His mighty Holy Spirit! He can change any heart! Do you have a stubborn heart towards God? Do you know someone who does not believe in Jesus and has a stubborn heart towards Him? God can change your heart, if you ask Him to. He can change the hearts of anyone! We should never give up praying for others because we know that no one has a heart too hard for the Holy Spirit to change.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Being born again is what Jesus called the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of God’s people, helping them turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. This is because we have to be born as a baby again.

Answer: False. Jesus did call this being born again, but not because we have to be born like a baby again. It’s because the change of heart the Holy Spirit works is so radical that God actual makes us into a new creation—a brand-new person on the inside.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. What was surprising about the sky? Who saw the surprise? What happened to him after he saw it?

Answer: Suddenly a heavenly light shone down on Paul. Paul saw the surprise. Jesus told him to stop persecuting Him (and His people). Jesus caused Paul to become blind and told him to go into Damascus and wait. Paul obeyed.

b. What did God change inside the man that was so surprising? How did He make this change?

Answer: Paul became a believer in Jesus. He boldly explained to others that Jesus was the Christ and urged them to repent of their sins and believe in Him. God sent His Holy Spirit to work in Paul’s heart and change him.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

Titus 3:4-7

“But when the kindness and love of ___ our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of ___ things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and ___ by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become ___ having the hope of eternal life.”

Answers: God; righteous; renewal; heirs.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being holy, yet providing the way through Jesus for unacceptable sinners (like all of us!) to be accepted by You as Your own, dear people.

C God, we confess that we are sinners who have chosen to disobey You and Your good ways. We are unacceptable to You, on our own. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for choosing to include people from every tribe, nation and language—not just Jews– as Your people.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we might know and love You. Keep strengthening Your people to go out and tell everyone about Jesus that they might be saved

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 12,13

Verse 1

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found.
Was blind but now I see.

Verse 2

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell

We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God’s laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them “sight” to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

He Saved Us

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 14

He saved us, he saved us,
Through the washing of re-birth
And renewal by the Spirit.
He saved us, he saved us,
Through the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit whom he poured out,
On us generously,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
The Holy Spirit whom he poured out,
On us through Jesus Christ.

Words adapted from Titus 3:4-7 Constance Dever © 2011

We could never please God with our own good works. Only through Jesus’ perfect life offered up in the place of sinners can we be saved. And what a salvation it is! God, Himself, sends His Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of His people. He gives them the gift of faith. He helps them turn away from their sins. He makes them clean of their sins and all new on the inside. This is how we become God’s people—His heirs, that is, His children who will receive eternal life with Him forever.