



**Unit 8 Prontos--ESV
The God Who Loves**



Curriculum for preschool and elementary age children,
training tools, music and other resources
are available for download or to order at:
www.praisefactory.org

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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 8 Prontos

PFI PRONTO**BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION***We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves***Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:***"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"*

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV*"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."*

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH*We're learning... Bible Truth 1:***God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts**

God has given many good gifts to all people--whether they love and obey Him or not. He made this beautiful world for all to enjoy. He has given each of us a heart to know and love Him and others. He has given each of us a body to do many different, wonderful things. He provides the sun and rain, the hot and cold, to grow the food we need. He keeps all living things alive each day. These are just some of the many good gifts God has blessed us with.

Why did God give us these good gifts? To enjoy them, to understand what He is like, and to glorify Him for giving them to us. Everyone should glorify God for His many good gifts given to them, but especially God's people. They enjoy the same good gifts as everyone else and far, far more. God is their Heavenly Father and they are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. And one day, they will get to live with Him forever. These are the very best gifts of all. They are gifts that can be ours even today, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE*How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!***Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17**

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

CASE STORY

2 Kings 5

Our story is called:**The Case of the Gift-seeking General.****As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who was the general? What gift was he seeking? Why would it be odd if he received this gift?
2. What gift did he find that he wasn't looking for?

Our story today takes place in Old Testament times, in Aram, about 800 years before Jesus lived on earth.

The kingdom of Aram that lay just north and east of Israel. It was a land of shifting sands and dry wilderness, except for one high, flat plain surrounded in snow-capped mountains. Melted snow flowed down out of the mountains through the rivers Abana and Pharpar, and watered the plain. Here the people of Aram grew delicious almonds, dates, pomegranates, and wheat. And here they built their great capital city, Damascus.

The King of Aram, Ben Hadad II, lived in Damascus, too, and what a good life he enjoyed. He had the best food from the plain; tons of gold and silver; lots of servants; rich clothes and many fine things. His father, King Ben Hadad I, gave him some of these, but many of them he had taken from other countries--especially Israel! Now the two countries were fierce enemies.

General Naaman led King Ben Hadad's great army. He was clever, brave and a very, very good shot. Some say it was Naaman who killed King Ahab of Israel by shooting an arrow in the tiny space between the breastplate and his chain mail. Now that's a good shot!

King Ben Hadad II treated his great general very well. He gave him a beautiful chariot pulled by horses. He gave him many riches and slaves from the enemies he defeated. King Ben Hadad II, even let Naaman be his personal escort to offer worship gifts of thanks at the very Temple of Rimmon, the greatest of Aram's gods.

Like all the people of Aram, General Naaman believed that Rimmon was the god of Thunder. He believed Rimmon gave them water to grow good crops on the plain and gave them the power to beat their enemies. No wonder Naaman thought it an honor to present worship gifts with the king at Rimmon's Temple! Surely Rimmon have given him all the victories in battle and all the good things he enjoyed! How proud Naaman was of his riches, the favor of the king and the blessing of Rimmon! He seemed

to have everything.

Yet for all of Naaman's good things, there was one more he wanted very much that neither he, nor the king, nor even Rimmon could give: healing. You see, General Naaman had a disease called leprosy. He had flaky and patchy spots all over his skin. They swelled up and oozed out fluid. It looked awful, but it felt even worse. General Naaman was miserable.

Then one day, help came from a most unusual place—a little Israelite girl. Naaman had captured on a raid on Israel and made her his wife's servant. Can you imagine being taken from your home by soldiers and forced to work as a slave? It would be easy to hate Naaman, but that's not what this little girl did. There was one very good thing that had not been taken away from that little girl when she was captured. Something better than all the other good things that she had enjoyed at home: she knew the LORD, the one, true God. She knew He was still with her, right there, far from home, in Aram. She trusted His good plan for her life; and so this little girl chose to help her master and mistress however she could.

The little girl noticed how General Naaman suffered from his leprosy. One day as told Naaman's wife: "If only my master General Naaman would see the prophet [Elisha] who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy!"

Naaman's wife told the exciting news to her husband. Could Elisha really heal him? Would Elisha heal him? After all, wasn't he the great general who had been attacking Israel and taking away its riches and people? Perhaps a rich present, perhaps a letter from the king would be needed to persuade Elisha to help him. The king was happy to help. What was good for his general was good for him and his armies. "Go," the king told General Naaman. "Take this letter to the king of Israel, ordering him to make his prophet heal you. Take a rich present for the prophet, too."

A rich treasure indeed was prepared. There were 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and enough exquisite, silky, colorful cloth to make 10 of the finest sets of clothes—it would take about 750 million dollars in today's money to equal that rich treasure. It was a huge payment, but Naaman was worth it. He was a great man. He was a proud man. Favored by the king. Blessed by the god Rimmon. He enjoyed many good things. These riches given to pay for his healing was yet another one.

Across a hundred miles of wilderness Naaman and his

servants rode, down to the palace of the King of Israel in Samaria. "Take this letter to your king," Naaman told a servant.

The king was upset when he read the letter. He couldn't heal Naaman or make Elisha heal him either. Only the LORD had the power to heal. He was the one, true God, who blessed all people with good things. He alone has the power to heal. "Would war break out because I can't heal the general? What should I do?" the king wondered. The king was worried, but not Elisha. "Send the man to me," he told the king. So away went Naaman, with his chariots full of treasure, to Elisha's house.

Naaman waited for Elisha to come out quickly, bow before him and perform his healing magic, just like the prophets of Rimmon did. Surely the great treasure would make him eager to serve. But Naaman was wrong. Elisha refused to even appear before Naaman. He was making a point: The LORD was not like Rimmon. He was the one, true God. And Elisha wasn't some fake magic-maker like Rimmon's prophets who made up stuff to please their king. The LORD was the one who gave him power to heal. So Elisha sent a lowly servant to great general Naaman with a message: "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan [River], and you will be healed."

Naaman was furious! How dare Elisha treat him like a nobody! "I thought Elisha would call on the name of the LORD, wave his hand over my leprosy and cure me," he said. "If just wants me to wash in a river, I could have stayed home and washed in the Abana or the Pharpar," he said. "I'm just going to go home!"

Naaman's servants tried to calm their master. If the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!' they said to him.

Naaman agreed. "So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times, as Elijah instructed and was completely healed! Now Naaman could see he had been wrong. He was not such a great man and Rimmon was not such a great god. Now he knew that the LORD was the one, true God. It was He who had been giving him all the good things he had enjoyed. And now this great, one true God, had given him two of the best gifts of all: healing of his leprosy and faith in Him! How loving the LORD had been to him, even him—a great enemy of His people!

"Naaman along with his servants went back to Elisha's

house. He stood before Elisha and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. Please accept now a gift from your servant." But Elisha refused to take any of it, no matter how Naaman urged him. Elisha wanted to make sure that Naaman knew it was the LORD who was the giver of his healing, not him. He should not be paid for something he did not do.

"If you will not," said Naaman, "please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry [I will take it home to build upon it an altar to worship the LORD] for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD. But may the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master [King Ben Hadad] enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this."

"Go in the peace of the LORD," Elisha reassured the general. And that is just what he did. And now in Damascus there would be two who worshiped the LORD together: a humble little servant girl...and a once proud general.

Something for You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

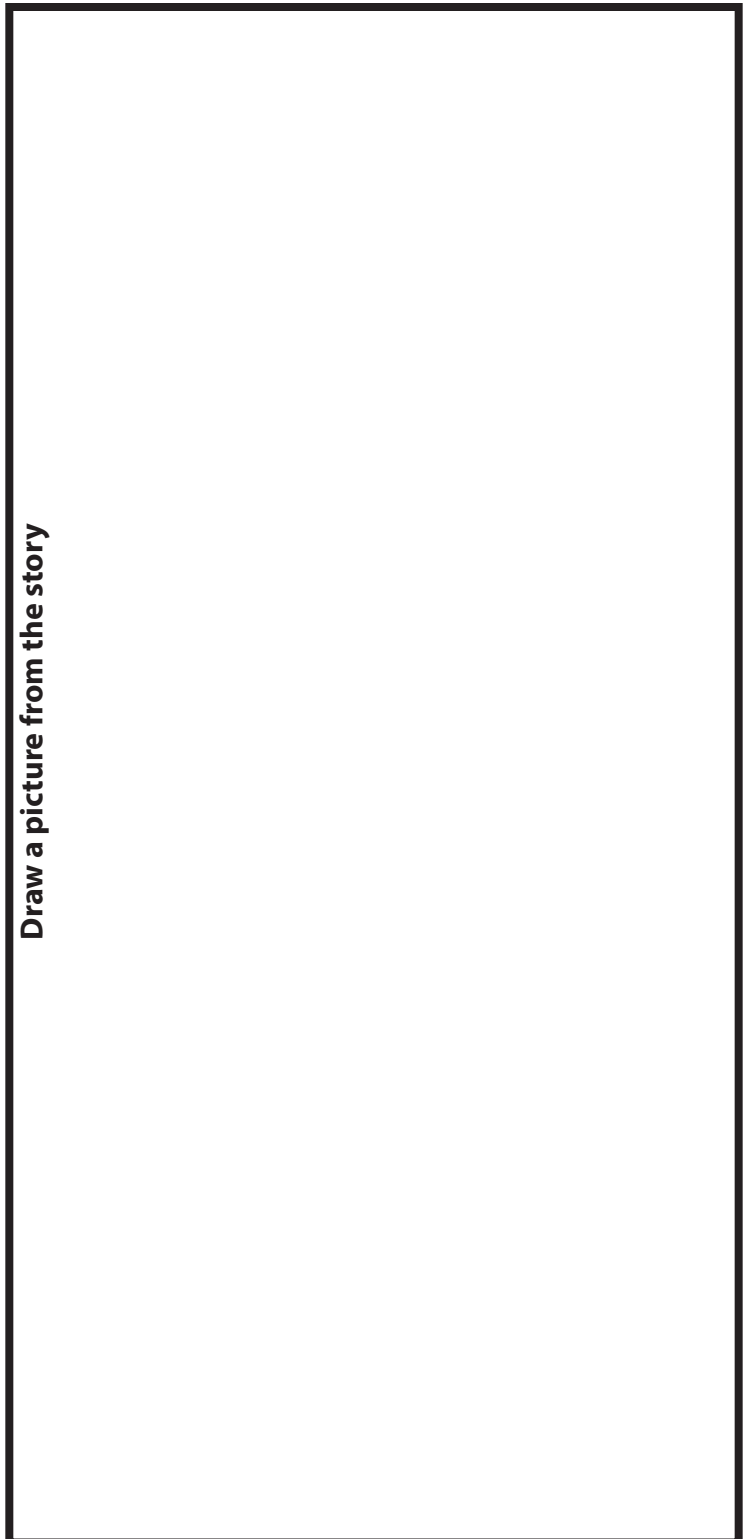
Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 145: 9,15-17

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

Isn't it amazing that the LORD would choose to heal this great, proud man who killed so many Israelites? Isn't it amazing that He would give General Naaman not just healing, but forgiveness of sins and faith in Him? Who is like the LORD! He is so loving that He gives even the best of gifts, even to His enemies? That is great news for us, too. For we all have proud hearts. We all like to make ourselves great. We act like His enemies, too. Too often we want to do things our own way, not His way. Too often we forget that every one of the good things we enjoy are gifts from the LORD. Yet, in His mercy and kindness to us, He keeps giving us so many good things. And to all who confess

their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, He forgives their sins and makes them His children to know Him and enjoy Him forever. Let's praise God for being the Giver of All Good Gifts to All People. Let's ask Him to help us to thank Him for all His good gifts to us. Let's ask Him to help us to turn from our sins and give us faith to believe in His Son Jesus as our Savior.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God only gives good gifts to people who love and obey Him. Answer: False. God showers all people with so many good things, whether they love and obey Him or not. Though, the very best of all His good gifts are those we receive when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. These we can only know if we become His people.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was the general? What gift was he seeking? Why would it be odd if he received this gift? Answer: General Naaman. Healing for his leprosy. He was the enemy of Israel. He had fought against and killed the people of Israel, God's people. Why would the LORD help him? b. What gift did he find that he wasn't looking for? He found faith in the LORD and salvation in Him. Answer:</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17 "The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has _____. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! The LORD is faithful in all his _____ and kind in all his works... The eyes of all _____ to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you _____ the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works." Answers: made; words; look; satisfy.</p>	<p>Be Thou My Vision <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 7</i></p> <p>Verse 3 Riches I heed not, or man's empty praise, Thou mine inheritance, now and always; Thou and Thou only, first in my heart, High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.</p> <p>Words: Ancient Irish; tr. Mary E. Byrne; versified, Eleanor H. Hull Music: Traditional Irish Melody; harm. David Evans</p> <p>Riches are a good gift from God. We use them to buy many good things that we enjoy. When people praise us for good/important things we do, that is a good gift from God, too. We all like to be encouraged and valued. These are good gifts, but they are not the best gift. The best gift we can have is when we become one of God's people and God, Himself, is our treasure and inheritance. That makes riches and people's praise worth almost nothing ("empty") in comparison.</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being so compassionate to all, even though we are rebels against You and Your good ways.</p> <p>C God, we confess that like Naaman, we enjoy many good things, but many times fail to praise and thank You as the good giver of them.</p> <p>T God, we thank You for seeking out sinners, like Naaman and like us. You have brought the good news of salvation to us, even when we weren't looking for it.</p> <p>S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us thankful for all the good gifts You gives us each and every day of our lives.</p>	<p>The LORD Is Good to All <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 8</i></p> <p>We all with unveiled face, Beholding the glory of the Lord, Are being transformed, Into the same image, From one degree of glory to another, For this comes from the Lord, The Lord, who is the Spirit. For this comes from the Lord, The Lord, who is the Spirit. The Lord, who is the Spirit. Second Corinthians Three, eighteen.</p> <p>Words: 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011</p> <p>Long ago, Moses met with the LORD and sometimes would actually glow with God's glory. Sometimes he would wear a veil that would cover up God's glory when he was with the people. Moses' face may have sometimes shown with God's glory, but God's people have His Holy Spirit inside them. God doesn't want them to hide His glory--they are not to veil His work in their lives, but show it to all. The Holy Spirit works inside them and transform them. He helps them to love God and live holy lives that reflect Him.</p>

PFI PRONTO**BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION*****We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves*****Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:***"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"*

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV*"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."*

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

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Why did God give us these good gifts? To enjoy them, to understand what He is like, and to glorify Him for giving them to us. Everyone should glorify God for His many good gifts given to them, but especially God's people. They enjoy the same good gifts as everyone else and far, far more. God is their Heavenly Father and they are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. And one day, they will get to live with Him forever. These are the very best gifts of all. They are gifts that can be ours even today, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE***How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!*****Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17**

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CASE STORY**Our story is called:****The Case of the Father-like Love.****As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who showed the Father-like love? Which father was her love like?
2. Who did she show this father-like love to? How was her love like God's?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out in 1944, in Haarlem, Holland.

Corrie had been sick with flu all night. How good it would have been to stay in bed all day! But instead, Corrie dragged herself out of bed and down the three flights of stairs of the ten Booms' house to help with morning chores.

Betsy, her sister, and Caspar, her old, grey-haired father, were already up and about. There was much to do in the ten Boom house. Caspar ten Boom together with his daughters ran a clock shop out of the front of their home. People came to buy a new clock or to fix a broken one. What a wonderful room that shop was! There were watches and clocks of every size on display and the room was filled with the sound of them each tick-tocking, cuckooing and chiming out the seconds, minutes and hours. It was music to Corrie's ears.

But the ten Booms took care of some very different "watches" in their home, too. These "watches" weren't in the clock room, but upstairs hidden behind the bookshelf in Corrie's room. "Watches" was the code name for the small group of Jewish people the ten Booms were protecting from the German soldiers. Why were these Jews in trouble? Because the wicked German leader, Adolf Hitler, wanted to get rid of them. Hitler had a plan to take control of the world. He thought his people, the Germans, were the best and smartest people in the world. He planned for them to be in control of everything. Certain other people he thought were so useless that they should be made slaves or should just be killed. The Jews were some of these people. So, as Hitler sent his army to take over country after country, one of the first things he had the soldiers and police do was to get rid of the Jews.

When Hitler's army took over Holland, where the ten Booms lived, he gave orders to get rid of the Jews who lived there and to punish anyone who tried to help them. Most people were too scared to help the Jews, but there

were a few brave people who decided to secretly help them anyway. They were called "The Underground;" and the ten Booms were part of it.

Why would the ten Booms risk their lives for these strangers? Because the ten Booms were Christians. They loved God and lived for Him. Love your neighbor as yourself... Love your enemies... Do to others as you would have them do to you... Be merciful just as your Father is merciful," Jesus had said. Surely these Jews were the neighbors they should love by protecting them, the ten Booms thought. Surely this was being merciful like their Heavenly Father.

God blessed all people with good things. Everyone: neighbors, enemies and everyone in between! He used His people to bless others with some of these good things: to show His love and mercy... and to tell the good news of salvation through Jesus. For this, the ten Booms risked their lives. This is how their Father in heaven loved people; this is what they would do, too.

So every day, Betsy and Corrie took care of their house and helped their father in the clock shop, and also took care of the Jews who lived in the hidden room. No wonder sick Corrie felt she had to get out of bed with all this work to do!

Corrie helped Betsy with the chores, tended to a stranger in the clock shop and then went back to bed. How she longed to rest! But this was not to be. The stranger at the shop had been a spy. He figured out that the ten Booms were hiding Jews and told the German soldiers. Soon the house was filled with soldiers. They brought the ten Booms to the living room. They beat down doors and cupboards looking for the secret room, but they couldn't find it. They took Corrie aside to question her.

"Where are the Jews!" they demanded. Corrie felt so sick that she thought she would faint, but God kept her strong. No matter what the Nazis said or did, she did not tell them anything about their Jews. At last the soldiers gave up. Nail up the door of this house and set a guard outside. If there is anyone hiding in there, they will not last long without help," the officer said.

The ten Booms were sent to prison while the Germans decided on their punishment... and in hopes of finding out where the Jews were hidden. Because Corrie was so sick, she was put in a cell by herself. For four months she lived in that lonely, dark, little space, with only a dirty, straw mattress and a blanket that someone had been sick on. It was

bitterly cold. She hardly had enough to eat each day: just a plate of thin oatmeal in the morning and one piece of black bread in the evening.

Yet even in that terrible prison, the Lord blessed her with good gifts. The Lord was with her each day, giving her strength to endure each hard day. Little by little, Corrie's sickness went away. A nurse who cared for her gave her a toothbrush, some soap and tiny copies of the four Gospels. Someone sent her news that her sister Betsie was still alive in the prison, too. The other ten Boom sister, Nollie (who had not been arrested), managed to give her a little package of cookies, a towel and a wonderful, secret message hidden under a stamp: "The watches left the cupboard safely"—all the Jews hidden in their secret hiding place had escaped without being captured! Corrie thanked God for these good gifts. She knew that He was the one who gave them to her.

Finally, one cold morning in May, Corrie was called before the Gestapo officer. She expected the worst. These men would do anything to get information about the Jews and the Underground. As they led her into the room, Corrie prayed, "Lord Jesus, you were once questioned, too. Please show me what to do."

The officer questioned Corrie for hours. "What do you spend your days doing, Miss ten Boom?" the officer asked, looking for a clue that would lead him to the Jews or other people who worked with the Underground. Corrie cleverly avoided tell him any information that would lead them to the Jews or other members of the Underground. Instead, she used his questions as a way to tell him about God.

"I run clubs for teenage girls. They come to have fun and learn about Jesus. I also have one for mentally handicapped young people. They need to hear about God's love, too," she told him.

The officer listened in amazement at all Corrie told him about the clubs. "Why would anyone spend so much time caring for unimportant people like young girls and mentally handicapped people?" he said. "You're wasting your time helping people like that."

"Oh, no!" Corrie told the officer. "God loves everyone, even the weak and the feeble. You see, the Bible tells us that God looks at things very differently from us."

The officer cut her off as soon as she started talking about God and the Bible. "That will be enough for today,"

he told her.

Back in her cell, Corrie thought about her conversation with the officer and wondered what he would do when they met together the next day. Did her talk about God and the Bible make him angry? Would he hurt her to get more information from her as many of the officers did? And how would she treat this man tomorrow, especially if he hurt her? Certainly if ever she had faced an enemy it was Nazis like this man! It would be easy to hate him and say mean things to him, but Corrie knew that wasn't God's way.

She was a Christian. She loved God and lived for Him. Wasn't she supposed to love her enemies and be merciful to them? God blessed all people with good things. Everyone: neighbors, enemies and everyone in between! He used His people to bless others with some of these good things. To show His love and mercy...and to tell the good news of salvation through Jesus--even to men like this Nazi officer.

The next day when Corrie appeared before the Gestapo officer for questioning, he didn't ask her about the Jews or the Underground. He asked her about God and the Bible. He told her about his life, too. He hated the work he had to do. He was worried about his family back in Germany because their town was being bombed every night. Corrie kindly listened, then told him the good news of salvation through Jesus. From then on, this enemy became the ten Boom's friend while they were in prison. He didn't have the power to free her or her sister, but he did all he could for them.

I wish I could say that Betsie, Corrie and Father ten Boom were freed from prison and allowed to go home, but I can't. Father ten Boom died in prison. Betsie and Corrie went on to suffer terribly along with thousands of Jews in Hitler's slave camps. Only Corrie lived to return home. But even through those horrible days, Corrie saw God's many good gifts to them,

Many times He provided for their needs in miraculous ways. Always He was there, helping them endure all their suffering. Always He was there, helping them love others and do good to them—even their enemies. Many, many people who suffered along with Corrie and Betsie knew a bit of God's good blessings as He reached out to neighbors, enemies and everyone in between through Corrie and Betsie. And best of all, were those who heard

and received God's greatest gift to them: salvation through Jesus.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 145: 9,15-17

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

God used Betsie and Corrie to give His good gifts of love and kindness to all kinds of people: neighbors, enemies, and everyone in between. What about you and me? How does God want us to treat our neighbors, enemies and everyone in between? Does He not want us to love them and give His good gifts of love and kindness to them, too? He does. Sometimes this is very, very hard to do, just like sometimes it was very, very hard for Corrie and Betsie. But we do not have to do this on our own. When we turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior, not will He save us from our sins and put His Holy Spirit in our hearts to know and enjoy Him, but He will give us strength to love all people with His love and kindness, just as He did Corrie and Betsie. Let's praise God for being the Giver of good gifts to all people. Let's ask Him to work in us that we might be like Him, giving the good gifts of love and kindness to everyone, even our enemies.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU**1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:**

God gave us good gifts to enjoy them, to understand what He is like and to glorify Him for giving them to us.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who showed the Father-like love? Which father was her love like? Corrie ten Boom (and her family). Her Heavenly

Answer: Father: God.

b. Who did she show this father-like love to? How was her love like God's?

Answer: She showed it to the Jews who needed a safe place to hide as well as to the Germans who took her prisoner and treated her and her family so cruelly. God gives good gifts to all, even those who do not love or obey Him. Corrie treated the Germans, who were so cruel to her, with kindness and love. She wanted them to come to know Jesus as their Savior, too.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:**Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17**

"The LORD is ___ to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

The LORD is ___ in all his words and kind in all his works...

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their ___ in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is ___ in all his ways and kind in all His works."

Answers: good; faithful; food; righteous.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN**Be Thou My Vision**

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 7

Verse 3

Riches I heed not, or man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Words: Ancient Irish; tr. Mary E. Byrne; versified, Eleanor H. Hull

Music: Traditional Irish Melody; harm. David Evans

Riches are a good gift from God. We use them to buy many good things that we enjoy. When people praise us for good/important things we do, that is a good gift from God, too. We all like to be encouraged and valued. These are good gifts, but they are not the best gift. The best gift we can have is when we become one of God's people and God, Himself, is our treasure and inheritance. That makes riches and people's praise worth almost nothing ("empty") in comparison.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being compassionate and being the Giver of compassion to Your people--and even to their enemies.

C God, we confess that many times, we do not act like the ten Booms. We would rather not help someone in need if it means we might suffer somehow. Many times we just want to do what is easiest or best for us.

T God, we thank You for sending Your powerful Holy Spirit to work in Your people so that they love others for Your name's sake, even their enemies, and even when it might mean they suffer.

S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Work in our hearts that we might be like You, who shows mercy and compassion on all, even Your enemies. Use us to bless others with some of Your many good gifts, especially the gift of hearing about salvation through Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE SONG**The LORD Is Good to All**

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 8

We all with unveiled face,
Beholding the glory of the Lord,
Are being transformed,
Into the same image,
From one degree of glory to another,
For this comes from the Lord,
The Lord, who is the Spirit.
For this comes from the Lord,
The Lord, who is the Spirit.
The Lord, who is the Spirit.
Second Corinthians Three, eighteen.

Words: 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, Moses met with the LORD and sometimes would actually glow with God's glory. Sometimes he would wear a veil that would cover up God's glory when he was with the people. Moses' face may have sometimes shown with God's glory, but God's people have His Holy Spirit inside them. God doesn't want them to hide His glory--they are not to veil His work in their lives, but show it to all. The Holy Spirit works inside them and transform them. He helps them to love God and live holy lives that reflect Him.

PFI PRONTO

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

God has given many good gifts to all people--whether they love and obey Him or not. He made this beautiful world for all to enjoy. He has given each of us a heart to know and love Him and others. He has given each of us a body to do many different, wonderful things. He provides the sun and rain, the hot and cold, to grow the food we need. He keeps all living things alive each day. These are just some of the many good gifts God has blessed us with.

Why did God give us these good gifts? To enjoy them, to understand what He is like, and to glorify Him for giving them to us. Everyone should glorify God for His many good gifts given to them, but especially God's people. They enjoy the same good gifts as everyone else and far, far more. God is their Heavenly Father and they are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. And one day, they will get to live with Him forever. These are the very best gifts of all. They are gifts that can be ours even today, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

CASE STORY

Acts 12:20-35

Our story is: The Case of the King Who Kept His Mouth Shut.

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

1. Who was the king? Over what was he made king?
2. What did he keep shut about? What should he have done instead?

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

A Jewish prince in jail! Who could believe that! Prince Agrippa certainly couldn't. One minute he had been enjoying the company of the royal family at dinner; the next, he was thrown in prison.

It was his servant Eutychus' fault. Months ago, Agrippa had been enjoying a chariot ride on a beautiful, pine tree-lined Via outside of Rome with his old school buddy, the Roman prince, Caligula. Agrippa and Caligula rode inside the luxurious carpentum, a chariot that was arched overhead with a covering of cloth. Eutychus sat on the outside seat in front, driving the mules. As they rode along, Agrippa and Caligula began to talk about Caligula's great uncle, Caesar Tiberius. Tiberius was a cruel man and a bad ruler. Everyone thought it, but no one said it for fear of Tiberius' punishment. But out there alone on the road with Caligula, Agrippa spoke up: "I can't wait for old Tiberius to die! You could get rid of his grandson, then rule the Roman Empire yourself. Then the world would be happy and so would I!" Agrippa said.

Eutychus heard every one of these dangerous words. He kept quiet until Agrippa had him arrested for stealing some of his clothes. One evening at a dinner with Tiberius and others of the royal family, Agrippa forced Eutychus to appear before Tiberius to receive Tiberius' punishment for his theft in the most embarrassing way possible. But, the things didn't go as Agrippa planned. Eutychus used this as a chance to tell Tiberius what Agrippa said to Caligula about him. Tiberius was furious! Guards bound him in heavy chains ride at the dinner table. They threw him in the palace prison, still in his royal robes.

For six months, Agrippa was chained to a guard in jail. He had lots to think about during that time. What a life full of good blessings he had enjoyed! He was a son of the great, Hasmonean Jewish kings. He had been sent to Rome by his parents to be instructed by the finest

teachers alongside Caligula, Claudius, and other sons of the royal Roman family. His parents had given him money to buy everything he wanted. He had a good wife and five children.

As a Jew, Agrippa knew who had given him all these good things: it was the LORD. He was the one, true God, maker of heaven and earth. He gave all people the good things they enjoyed. He gave them life, itself. What were the words of the Ashrey (Psalm 145) he had heard many godly Jews sing three times a day, every day? "Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise... One generation will commend your works to another... They will celebrate your abundant goodness... The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made... The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down... You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

Yes, Agrippa knew God had given him many good gifts, but what a mess he had made with them! He used up all his money impressing people with big parties and expensive gifts. He borrowed huge amounts of money from others...and never paid them back! He had been an honored friend of Caesar's family and now here he was in jail! Tiberius might even put him to death for his foolish words! Agrippa had used the good things God had given him to make others think he was a great man, but look at him now: a prisoner! He was lower than low.

To whom much is given, much will be required. God had given Agrippa all these good things to glorify Him. Agrippa had used them to get people to glorify himself, instead of God. A day would come when the Lord would no longer show mercy to Agrippa for what he had done with His good gifts to him; but that day was not yet. God, in His great patience and love, was going to give Agrippa more time and more good things.

Caesar Tiberius became sick and died. Agrippa's friend, Caligula became emperor. Caligula released Agrippa from prison and honored him for his loyalty. He took a golden tiara and placed it on Agrippa's head: "I crown you king over the lands from Damascus to Nabatea, your uncle Philip's territories," he told Agrippa. Then picking up a heavy, golden chain, Caligula said: "In prison, you bore a heavy chain of iron for saying I would make a better emperor than my great uncle, Tiberias. You have suffered much.

Now for honoring me on that day, I honor you today. I give you this chain of gold of the same weight as the iron one you once carried."

"Ruler over my uncle Philip's lands!" Agrippa thought to himself. "And not just a ruler, but a king, with powerful to do as I like! Not even my uncle Herod Antipas is a king! This is wonderful!"

Agrippa enjoyed more riches, fame and power than ever before. Before long he had become king over all of Judea (what we call Israel), including the prize jewel: Jerusalem—home of the Temple! What a life full of good things Agrippa enjoyed! But what would he do with these good things this time? Would he choose again to glorify himself with these good gifts, or this time would he glorify the LORD?

Agrippa wanted to be a good ruler for the Jews. He pleased the Pharisees and priests by keeping all their little rules for how to live and what to eat and drink; and, by always making the right sacrifices at the Temple. He even read God's Word aloud at some of the special ceremonies. He took that great, gold chain that Caligula had given him and hung it high in the Temple Treasury room, where people's money offerings were kept, to remind people that even the greatest men may lose all they have and that God sometimes chooses to raise them back up to greatness again. He gave the Jews great gifts and protected them from their enemies. He built a very strong, new wall around Jerusalem and many other beautiful buildings and arenas for the Jews to enjoy. He punished their enemies and tried to crush the Christians by arresting Peter and killing James. The Jews thought what Agrippa did was so wonderful that they called him: Agrippa the Great.

The Jews loved Agrippa, but God was not at all pleased. To whom much is given, much will be required. In His love, God had given Agrippa many good things to enjoy, yes; but also to glorify Him. Agrippa had used the good things God had given him to get people to glorify him, not God. Agrippa had even used his good gifts to kill the Christians and to try to stop the good news of Jesus from spreading to others. A day would come when the Lord would no longer show mercy to Agrippa for what he had done with God's good gifts given to him. That day was not far off now. Soon His patience would come to an end.

King Agrippa decided to hold a big festival to honor Caesar Claudius in the city of Caesarea, about 80 miles

south of Jerusalem. There would be races and lots of fun, kind of like the Olympic Games. Agrippa would be the host in charge of the celebration. A great crowd of people gathered in the huge, outdoor arena.

Among the crowd were some people from Sidon and Tyre--enemies Agrippa had punished by keeping food from their starving people. They had come to make peace with the king. They gave Blastus, King Agrippa's servant, a generous gift that he might work something out with the king. Blastus was successful. Agrippa agreed to speak to them in the great arena on the morning of second day of the Festival.

Everyone gathered in the arena early that bright, sunny morning, and awaited for Agrippa the Great to enter, to hear what he would say to the people of Sidon and Tyre, and to begin the day's festivities. As the king entered, the crowd gasped at what they saw. Agrippa was not wearing his usual, royal robes. Instead, he seemed to dazzle with a blaze of glory. The people had never seen anything like it! They could hardly keep looking at him; he was so blindingly bright with light. From one place in the arena and then another the people began to cry out: "Be merciful to us; for although up to this time we honored you only as a man, yet now we praise you as a god!"

What would Agrippa do with the people's praises? He knew that he had no glory of his own. The splendid brightness the people saw came from the special robe woven entirely out of silver he had made for the Festival. He knew that everything he was and he had were only good gifts from the LORD and that He alone should be worshiped. Agrippa was just a man, no matter how dazzling his clothes were--and he knew it. Here was a wonderful chance to glorify God as the only, true God and the giver of all good things. Here was a wonderful chance to encourage the crowds to see the LORD's love and goodness. But Agrippa didn't take it. He wanted to glorify himself rather than God. He said nothing about the LORD. He accepted the people's praise for himself.

To whom much is given, much will be required. God had given Agrippa so many good things with which to glorify Him. Agrippa had used them to encourage people to glorify himself, instead. Now the day had at last come when the Lord would no longer show Agrippa mercy for what he had done with the good gifts given to him. In His great mercy, God had been patient with Agrippa, now it

was coming to an end. Right then and there, the LORD ordered an angel to strike Agrippa down with a terrible sickness caused by worms inside his stomach. Antipas grabbed his stomach with the sudden pain. He collapsed. His men had to carry him out. For five days Antipas suffered in agony, then God took away His last good gift to Agrippa.... his very life.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 145: 9-10,13,15-17

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

What a terrible ending to a man God had blessed with so many good things! How merciful and patient He had been with Agrippa! God gave him more and more good things. He gave him so many chances to use them to glorify Him; but Agrippa rarely did. He used them instead to glorify himself. I wonder what Agrippa thought about those last five days of his life? I hope that he repented of his sins against the Lord.

But what about you and me? Each day God, in His love, blesses us with many good gifts: friends, family, food, homes. Talents and opportunities. Bodies that move and breath; heart that can know and love God and others. What do we do with them? Enjoy them, no doubt. But who do we use them to glorify: ourselves or the LORD? Like Agrippa, there are many times we do not use the LORD's good gifts to just glorify ourselves. We should confess these sins and turn away from them. We can trust in Jesus, who came to save us even from God's punishment for them. He will forgive us. But that is not all! The LORD promises to all who trust in Him like this, He will send His Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and give them more love for Him and help them to use all God has given them to glorify Him. Let's praise God for being the loving Giver of everything good that we enjoy. Let's ask Him to send His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, so we might truly glorify Him with them.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

The best of God's good gifts are those that God's people know and receive.

Answer: True! God is their Heavenly Father. They are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. They will get to live with Him forever. These gifts can be our when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the king? Over what was he made king?

Answer: King Agrippa. He was made king over all of Judah.

b. What did he keep shut about? What should he have done instead?

Answer: The people praised him for being a god. He should have instead turned their praise to the LORD instead of keeping it for himself.

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

Psalms 145:9-10,13,15-17

"The LORD is good to all, and his ___ is over all that he has made. All your works shall give ___ to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his ____...
The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and ___ in all His works."

Answers: mercy; thanks; works; kind.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Be Thou My Vision

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 7

Verse 3

Riches I heed not, or man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Words: Ancient Irish; tr. Mary E. Byrne; versified, Eleanor H. Hull

Music: Traditional Irish Melody; harm. David Evans

Riches are a good gift from God. We use them to buy many good things that we enjoy. When people praise us for good/important things we do, that is a good gift from God, too. We all like to be encouraged and valued. These are good gifts, but they are not the best gift. The best gift we can have is when we become one of God's people and God, Himself, is our treasure and inheritance. That makes riches and people's praise worth almost nothing ("empty") in comparison.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being so patient to sinners, giving them many chances to turn from their sins and turn to You in faith.

C God, we confess that many times, Agrippa, we do not honor You as we should. We like for people to honor us more than we want them to honor You.

T God, we thank You for promising to save all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their own Savior.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Give us grateful hearts for all You give us and to help us give You the glory for all Your goodnesses shown to us.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Is Good to All

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 8

We all with unveiled face,
Beholding the glory of the Lord,
Are being transformed,
Into the same image,
From one degree of glory to another,
For this comes from the Lord,
The Lord, who is the Spirit.
For this comes from the Lord,
The Lord, who is the Spirit.
The Lord, who is the Spirit.
Second Corinthians Three, eighteen.

Words: 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, Moses met with the LORD and sometimes would actually glow with God's glory. Sometimes he would wear a veil that would cover up God's glory when he was with the people. Moses' face may have sometimes shown with God's glory, but God's people have His Holy Spirit inside them. God doesn't want them to hide His glory--they are not to veil His work in their lives, but show it to all. The Holy Spirit works inside them and transform them. He helps them to love God and live holy lives that reflect Him.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Even before God created the world, He loved His people. Even back then, He knew all about them. He knew that they would be sinners like everyone else. He knew they would all rebel against Him and deserve His punishment for their sins.

Yet even though He knew all this about them before even a single one of them was born, He loved them deeply and wanted them to be His people. He chose to set His love upon them in a special way. He chose to send His Son, Jesus, to pay for their sins. He chose that by the Holy Spirit, He would give them faith in Jesus, and through that faith, He would forgive their sins. He would give them each a new heart to love and obey Him. They would be His special people--a countless number from every language and people on earth, who would live to enjoy Him and praise His amazing love forever.

We can know God's love and be His dearly loved people, too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6, HCSB

"For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved."

CASE STORY

Ephesians 1; Romans 8; Genesis; Exodus; 1 Kings/ 1 Chronicles; 2 Kings/2 Chronicles; Luke; Acts; Revelation 7:9

Our story is called:

The Case of the Long-Lived, Lavish Love.

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

1. Whose love was so long-lived? Who did he love?
2. When did his love for them begin? What was so lavish about it?

Our story today starts out before the beginning of time, when there was just God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God knew them all. All of His people. Abraham and Sarah; Moses, the Israelites; King David and King Manasseh. Peter, and Paul...and many others whose names we don't know. A number too big for our little brains to count. But God could know them all and did know them all--all of His people.

And God didn't just know them when they were born or lived or died. He knew them long before that. Before anything had been created in the heavens or earth. Before the first ray of light shone in the universe or the earth took shape. Before the first dolphin leaped in the ocean or the majestic eagle played upon the wind or a wooly animal munched on a juicy blade of grass. Before wisp of cherubim wing brushed the air or their angelic voices rang out in praise of God. Why even before time itself began. God knew this great number of people, inside and out. And He did not just know them; He loved them with a special love.

You and I know something of love: warm hugs, kind words and hands ready to care for our needs. But even the best that we know of love is only like a tiny drop compared with the depths of God's love for His people.

God's love is full of patience and kindness. He is so slow to anger! When His people sin against Him, He forgives their sins and keeps no record of their wrongs.

How completely He looks after them! His love is always protecting them from anything that is not for their good. He rescues them out of dangers and temptations. When they are scared, He quiets them with assurances of His love. And oh, how He greatly delights in them! The Bible tells us that He even rejoices over them with singing. Can you imagine: God singing over you because you bring Him so much joy? That is how it is between God and His people. Everyone else's love may fail them, but God's

love never will.

Now perhaps you are thinking: "Wow! There must be something really special about these people that He chose to fix His special love upon them even before He created the world. I wonder what it is that made them so attractive, so deserving?"

Well actually, there was absolutely NOTHING in Abraham and Sarah; Moses, the Israelites; King David and King Manasseh; Peter, and Paul nor any other of God's people that made them attractive or deserving of His special love. Matter of fact, there was every reason for them NOT to deserve it. Why? Because of something God saw and knew about every single one of them: they were all sinners!

Yep, all these people--like every other single person God would create--would choose to rebel against Him and His good ways. Abraham, He knew, would grow up as a worshiper of idols. He would lie about his wife, Sarah, to an Egyptian king. He put her in danger to keep himself safe! Sarah would only laugh at God's amazing promises to give her a child in her old age.

Moses would murder a man and runaway from the Egyptian leaders rather than accepting his punishment. The Israelites would forget how God had rescued them from the Egyptians and make idols to worship instead.

The best of their kings, David, would murder a man and take his wife. The worst of their kings, Manasseh, would build altars to idols in the Temple to the LORD and make terrible sacrifices to them.

One of Jesus' best friends, Peter, would deny he even knew Jesus to save his own life. Proud Paul boasted in his good works as a Pharisee and hated Christians so much that he had them put in jail or killed.

And the rest of God's people were no different. They would all be sinners, too. Far from deserving God's special love, they would deserve His wrath and eternal punishment for their sins.

But back there, before time began, God knew this. And still, it was His will and good pleasure to set His special love upon them. Instead of giving them the punishment they would deserve for their sins, He was choosing to lavish upon them every spiritual blessing—every good thing that God could give to the hearts of people.

How could God do this? Didn't His holiness require their sins to be punished? Yes, it did. So there was only one way to do what He chose to do. He must give them all to Jesus,

the Beloved Son of God right there before the beginning. You see, none of God's people would never be able to deserve God's love, but Jesus did. And they would never be able to pay for their sins, but Jesus could.

So, in the most amazing display of love, God the Father gave these people to His Son. He proclaimed them "in Jesus Christ." Jesus would be their substitute. He would change places with them and do for them things they could never do themselves. He would take all the punishment for their sins on the cross, and in exchange, He would give them His standing of perfect holiness before His Father so they could be adopted as His own precious children, and receive all the spiritual blessing that were His. This would be to the praise of God's glorious grace--His love lavished upon undeserving sinners.

As God planned, so all things began. God created His beautiful, perfect world, and placed Adam and Eve in it. All too soon, their perfect relationship with God was broken as they rebelled against Him and His good ways. Death came to them and all people after them, as God's just punishment for sin.

Yet just as He had planned, year after year God's lavish love for His people in Jesus Christ flowed out irresistibly to them. He gave them the Bible to know His truth. He sent the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts, convicting them of their sins and giving them faith to believe. Through Jesus, He saved them from their sins and filled their hearts with love for Him and for others. He blessed them with power to live as He wanted them to live. He filled their voices with songs of praise of the wonders of His glorious grace--His love lavished upon undeserving sinners.

Abraham left his father's house and the idols he worshiped. By faith he believed the LORD and went to the land He promised him. Sarah's mocking turned to faith and praise as she became pregnant and gave birth to Isaac at the age of ninety years old!

Moses stood in the presence of the LORD on Mt. Sinai and believed. God gave him such faith in Him that he went back to Egypt to proclaim the greatness of the LORD to mighty Pharaoh himself and command him to let the Israelites go. Many of the Israelites turned away from idols and went back to worshipping the LORD. They trusted Him to lead them in victory against many powerful enemies.

Great king David was known as "a man after God's own heart" because of his great love for the LORD. King

Manasseh repented of his sins in prison in Assyria. The LORD forgave him and had him freed to return to Jerusalem and destroy all the idols he once had worshiped. All these men and women lived before the coming of Jesus, yet they looked forward in faith to the day He would come.

Then there were others who lived in Jesus' time. The Lord forgave Peter for denying Him. And by His Holy Spirit, God gave Peter great boldness to proclaim Jesus as Lord. Instead of hiding from suffering, now Peter praised God for a chance to suffer and die for Jesus.

Paul confessed himself the very worst of sinners. He counted everything he had been so proud about as garbage compared with knowing Jesus Christ.

The story of God's love didn't stop then. In the thousands of years since Jesus died on the cross and rose to reign in heaven, God has been continuing to work in the hearts of His people, bringing them each to repentance of their sins and faith in Jesus up to this very day. On God's love will go, fulfilling His plan until all His people, over the world, through all time, hear of God's amazing love for them and turn and believe in Him.

How will they hear this good news? Through God's people living today. There is still so much work to be done; a message to take to every corner of the world that all may hear and come to God.

And what a glorious day it will be when at last, at the end of time, all of God's adopted children will all be gathered together for the first time! All that countless number will praise their wonderful Father who chose to love them; and Jesus, who chose to take their punishment for sin; and the Holy Spirit, who worked in their hearts and gave them the gift of faith. In one loud voice they will sing the praise of God's glorious grace--His lavish love poured out upon them, just undeserving sinners. A love that began before the beginning of time and will never stop for all eternity.

Something for You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

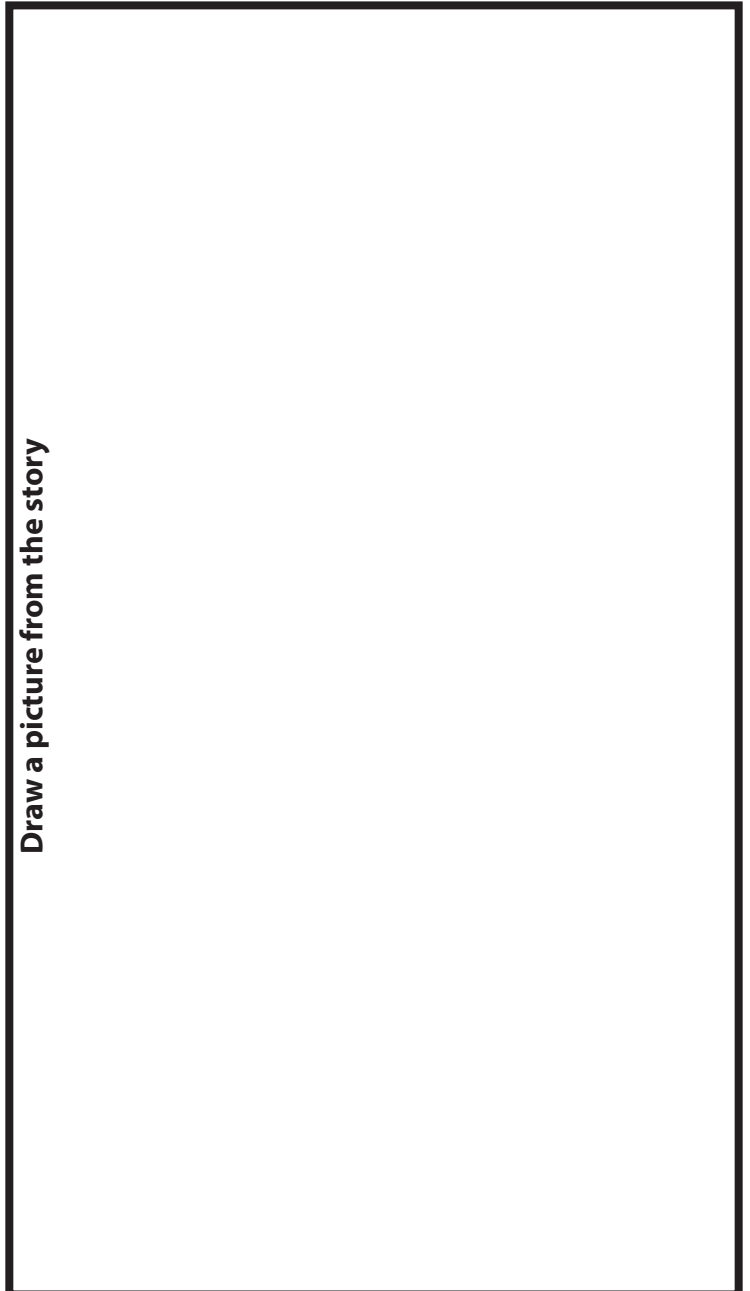
God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 1:4-6

"For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved."

What about you and me? Can we be God's precious, adopted children? Can we be part of this great multitude of people loved by Him? Yes, indeed! He promises to adopt as His children all who confess their sins, turn away from and turn to Him in repentance and faith, trusting Jesus as their Savior. Let's praise God for His lavish love towards undeserving sinners. Let's praise Him for making them His precious adopted children and pouring out upon them all the spiritual blessings that belong to His Son Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our heart that we might turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to give us boldness to share the great news of His amazing love to others that they too might turn from their sins, trust in Jesus, and become His precious children, too.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God didn't start loving His people until after He created the world.
 Answer: False. God knew and loved His people even before He created the world.

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. Whose love was so long-lived? Who did he love?
 Answer: The LORD. He loved all of His people.

b. When did his love for them begin? What was so lavish about it?
 Answer: It began before the creation of the world. He loved them, even though they were sinners who would rebel against Him. He loved them by giving His beloved Son to suffer and die for their sins.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6
 "For He ___ us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be ___ through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His ___ and will, to the praise of His glorious ___ that He favored us with in the Beloved."
 Answers: chose; adopted; favor; grace.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Oh, How I Love Jesus
PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 9

Verse 1
 There is a name I love to hear,
 I love to sing its worth;
 It sounds as music in my ear,
 The sweetest name on earth.

Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Because He first loved me.

Words: Frederick Whitfield Music: Anonymous

Through Jesus, God loved His people before they loved Him. He loved them while they were still sinners. He loved them even before the creation of the world. This makes God's people so happy! They know that their sinful hearts would never choose God if He had loved them and chose them first. They know without God choosing to send Jesus to save them from their sins, they would never ever know God. This makes the name of Jesus the sweetest name on earth.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for loving Your people from even before the beginning of the world.

C God, we confess that like all people, we are sinners. We cannot deserve Your love by our own goodness. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that even before the creation of the world, You knew Your people and planned to send Jesus to save them from their sins.

S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us Your dearly loved, adopted people who will get to love You and know Your love forever.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For He Chose Us
PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 10

For He chose us in Him before the foundation,
 Before the foundation of the world,
 To be holy and blameless in his sight,
 Yes, he chose us before the foundation of the world.
 In love he predestined us to be adopted for Himself,
 Through Jesus Christ,
 According to His will and favor,
 Yes, In love He predestined us.
 Ephesians One, four and five.

Words: Ephesians 1:4-5 HCSB Music: Constance Dever ©2012

God loved His people long before they loved Him. He loved them and chose to adopt them as His people, even before He created (founded) the world. Why did He do this? Because it pleased Him to do it! It would show how wonderful He is and how great the good gifts He gives His people because of Jesus. We think of what He's done and we praise Him for being so good to people like us. People who are sinners, but through Jesus, are made to be holy--without sin and without blame in His sight.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Even before God created the world, He loved His people. Even back then, He knew all about them. He knew that they would be sinners like everyone else. He knew they would all rebel against Him and deserve His punishment for their sins.

Yet even though He knew all this about them before even a single one of them was born, He loved them deeply and wanted them to be His people. He chose to set His love upon them in a special way. He chose to send His Son, Jesus, to pay for their sins. He chose that by the Holy Spirit, He would give them faith in Jesus, and through that faith, He would forgive their sins. He would give them each a new heart to love and obey Him. They would be His special people--a countless number from every language and people on earth, who would live to enjoy Him and praise His amazing love forever.

We can know God's love and be His dearly loved people, too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6, HCSB

"For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Doctor Who Needed Patience.

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

1. Who was the doctor who needed patience? Who needed to be patient with him? How?
2. What did the Lord do to bring the change that was so patiently waited for?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out around 1839 in Scotland.

William put the last of his things into the big, leather trunk. "Wait, William! Don't close it! I have something else for you to take with you," his mother said. She placed a beautiful, new Bible in his hands. He opened it up to the cover page and saw she had written her name, his name and a Bible verse.

"You'll need this, William," she told him. "You're just seventeen years old. Edinburgh is a big city compared to Montrose. You will enjoy many new things while you study at the university there: new friends, teachers, and things to do. There will be new temptations, too. Read your Bible! Don't forget what I've taught you about God. And remember: I will be praying for you."

She placed the Bible in the trunk and William shut it. They said their farewells and he was off. William's mother loved her son so much! She had cared for him well these past seventeen years. She knew God's love and wanted William to know it, too. Many times she had told him the amazing story of God's love for sinners. She told him how all people had rebelled against God and His good ways. How they no longer had hearts of love for Him and deserved God's never-ending punishment for their sins. Yet God loved His sinful people and chose to save them even though they did not love Him. He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross and take the punishment for sins for all who would ever believe in Him and turn from their sins. His Holy Spirit would live in their hearts, giving them faith and love for God. They would get to go on loving and enjoying Him forever. What was the verse she had taught him? "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever would believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life." How she wanted him to believe in Jesus! How she wanted him to know this God who loved first!

William thought Edinburgh was amazing. He walked

up and down the hilly, cobblestone streets, looking at the tall, stone houses, stately government buildings, many shops and markets all a-bustle with buyers and sellers. Most breath-taking of all, was the magnificent Edinburgh Castle that rose high above the city at the top of the steep street called the Royal Mile.

Life in Edinburgh was everything William's mother said it would be: full of opportunities and temptations! William was studying to be a doctor. Here at the University of Edinburgh he was getting to learn from some of the finest doctors of his time.

But unfortunately, these men taught him more than just medicine. They didn't believe in God and looked down on anyone who did. William wanted to please these men, so he chose to reject Him, too. He would do nothing to do with the God who loved first.

Then there were William's new friends. These were all very smart, but they chose to do many foolish things. They spent their time getting drunk and doing other bad things. William wanted to please his new friends, so he started doing what they did. Before long he craved whiskey so much that he sipped on a drink almost all the time.

Whiskey was expensive and William was poor. He started selling anything he could to the pawn shop for money to buy whiskey. "I certainly don't need this Bible my mother gave me," he decided, scooping it up with other things to take and sell. "It looks as good as new. It should be worth a lot," he thought.

Whiskey got the better of many university students. They drank so much that they couldn't keep up with their studies and had to leave; but not William. William kept studying right along with his drinking. He finished as one of the very best students in the school. He went to work at the most important hospital in Edinburgh and soon became their best doctor. He was known for saving the lives of patients no one else could help. He became very rich and very proud. His favorite sound was the rattling of the emergency room carts made as a badly wounded person was rolled into the hospital. "Here's another chance for me to beat death with my own great skill," he told himself.

William wasn't just proud of his skill as a doctor. He was proud all the time. He wanted nothing to do with God. In school, he had chosen to forget about God, but now he outright scorned Him. He joined the Infidel Club, a club for

atheists (people who do not believe in God at all). They enjoyed making fun of Christians and doing bad things the Bible said was wrong. William was particularly good at mocking God and soon became one of the club's leaders.

William had convinced himself that there was no God Who Loved First, but he was wrong. That wonderful God was still very much alive and at work-- even loving William. He had loved William before He created the world. He loved William when before William was born He loved William when his mother told him the good news of Jesus. He even loved William now as he mocked Him. And one day--just the right day--William was going to know this.

That right day came when a man, crushed in an accident at work, was rushed into the hospital. The man looked hopelessly hurt. Dr. William Mackay was called for. Perhaps he could cheat death again as he had so many times before.

William took one look at the man and knew not even he could help. William looked at the man's face. It was filled with suffering, yet there was something else he saw that surprised him: a look of peace. William couldn't make sense of it. Never had he seen this look on such an injured man in all his years of doctoring.

"Tell me, doctor, how bad is it" the man asked.

"You'll be all right," William said, untruthfully.

"No, doctor. Tell me the truth. I want to know if this is life or death," the man insisted. "I'm not afraid to die. I am ready. I trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I have to die, I know I am going to be with Him."

William told him the truth: "You have no more than three hours to live."

Most men would have broken down in fear with these words, but not this man. Once more William could hardly believe what he saw. Not even this news broke the peace on this man's face.

"Thank you, doctor," was all he said.

"Is there anything you would like us to do for you?" William asked, with unusual kindness.

"Yes! Here in my pocket is my money. Could someone please take it to the lady I rent my room from and pay her. And could they ask her to send me the book?"

"What book is that?" the doctor asked.

"Oh, just the book," the man said. "She will know."

William asked a hospital worker to carry out the dying man's wishes. He went to care for other patients, couldn't

stop thinking about the dying man's face and words: "I am ready to die, doctor. I trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ." Ready to die because of Jesus? You could tell he truly believed it by the way he was dying. And what was this book he wanted?

At last William went back to find out what happened. Did the man get his book before he died? "What happened to the man who had the terrible accident?" he asked the nurse.

"He died a few minutes ago," she replied.

"And did he get his book?" William asked. "What kind of book was it? A bank book that told how much money he had?"

"Yes, he got it. Just before he died. It's there, under his pillow, see for yourself," she answered.

William lifted up the dead man's pillow and pulled out the book. It was a Bible. It looked so familiar. He opened the cover and gasped at what he saw: there was his mother's name, his name and a Bible verse, written in his own mother's handwriting. This was his Bible! The Bible he had sold for whiskey long ago.

William didn't miss God's love in all this. Surely there was a God Who Loved First. Surely He had loved William all these years that William had rejected and mocked him. William's hard heart thawed in that moment. His heart was filled with shame over his sin and how he had treated God and wasted the life He had given him. Overcome with sadness and grief, William tucked the Bible in his coat and hurried to his private office. He fell on his knees and prayed to God: "Please forgive me, God. Please have mercy on me!" he cried.

What were the words he had heard his mother tell him so long ago? "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." This was the God Who Loved First. He had sent His Son Jesus to die for sinners who believe in Him—even for terrible sinners like himself. Right then and there, he trusted in Jesus as his own Savior. He was forgiven his sins and filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh, such peace, oh, such joy William knew at that moment! For now at last, he knew the God Who Loved First. William's heart filled with love for Him in return. This was life as it was meant to be! Eternal life: knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ! And this he would get to enjoy forever and ever.

After a few years, William stopped being a doctor and became a preacher. He wanted to spend all his time telling people about this amazing God Who Loved First. He wanted them to know that even if they had been terrible sinners like he had, that they could still turn to Him, confess their sins, trust Jesus and be saved. Then they could have the great delight of loving Him and knowing Him, too.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 1:4-6:

"For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved."

What about you and me? Have we done sinful things? Have we dishonored God or mocked Him? Could the God Who Loved First love us? Yes, He could! Yes, He will! Whoever confesses their sins to Him and trusts in Jesus as their Savior, He promises to forgive their sins and make them one of His own, special people. The Holy Spirit will come and live in them and fill their hearts with joy and peace, too. They can love Him who loved them first forever and ever, just like William. Let's praise this God Who Loved First. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, that we might know Him and love Him more and more.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU	BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God didn't know His people would be sinners. If He had, He wouldn't have chosen them. Answer: False! God knew that all of His people would rebel against Him and He chose them anyway. He chose to save them all through Jesus. How amazing is the LORD!</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was the doctor who needed patience? Who needed to be patient with him? How? Answer: Dr. William Mackay. His mother. She needed to patiently wait for the Lord to answer her prayers and hopes that her son would be saved.</p> <p>b. What did the Lord do to bring the change that was so patiently waited for? Answer: He used the very Bible that she had him take with him to school.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6 "For He chose us in Him, ___ the foundation of the world, to be holy and ___ in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through ___ ___ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the ___." Answers: before; blameless; Jesus Christ; Beloved.</p>	<p>Oh, How I Love Jesus <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 9</i></p> <p>Verse 1 There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth; It sounds as music in my ear, The sweetest name on earth.</p> <p>Oh, how I love Jesus, Oh, how I love Jesus, Oh, how I love Jesus, Because He first loved me.</p> <p>Words: Frederick Whitfield Music: Anonymous</p> <p>Through Jesus, God loved His people before they loved Him. He loved them while they were still sinners. He loved them even before the creation of the world. This makes God's people so happy! They know that their sinful hearts would never choose God if He had loved them and chose them first. They know without God choosing to send Jesus to save them from their sins, they would never ever know God. This makes the name of Jesus the sweetest name on earth.</p>
AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY	BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the great Lover of Your sinful people through Christ. You loved them long before they turn from their sins and love You..</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times, like William, we know the good news of Jesus, but choose to do things our own way. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for not loving Your people based on their own goodness, but on Your love for them through Jesus. Thank You that You can turn even the most rebellious, unbelieving heart to know and love You.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Work in the hearts of others we know that do not believe in Him.</p>	<p>For He Chose Us <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 10</i></p> <p>For He chose us in Him before the foundation, Before the foundation of the world, To be holy and blameless in his sight, Yes, he chose us before the foundation of the world. In love he predestined us to be adopted for Himself, Through Jesus Christ, According to His will and favor, Yes, In love He predestined us. Ephesians One, four and five.</p> <p>Words: Ephesians 1:4-5 HCSB Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>God loved His people long before they loved Him. He loved them and chose to adopt them as His people, even before He created (founded) the world. Why did He do this? Because it pleased Him to do it! It would show how wonderful He is and how great the good gifts He gives His people because of Jesus. We think of what He's done and we praise Him for being so good to people like us. People who are sinners, but through Jesus, are made to be holy--without sin and without blame in His sight.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Even before God created the world, He loved His people. Even back then, He knew all about them. He knew that they would be sinners like everyone else. He knew they would all rebel against Him and deserve His punishment for their sins.

Yet even though He knew all this about them before even a single one of them was born, He loved them deeply and wanted them to be His people. He chose to set His love upon them in a special way. He chose to send His Son, Jesus, to pay for their sins. He chose that by the Holy Spirit, He would give them faith in Jesus, and through that faith, He would forgive their sins. He would give them each a new heart to love and obey Him. They would be His special people--a countless number from every language and people on earth, who would live to enjoy Him and praise His amazing love forever.

We can know God's love and be His dearly loved people, too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6, HCSB

"For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved."

CASE STORY

*Acts 18-20; Ephesians; Colossians 4:7-9,
1 and 2 Timothy, Revelation 2:1-7*

Our story is:

The Case of the Chosen Who Needed Courage.

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

1. Who were the chosen? Who had chosen them and when?
2. What did He chose them to be and to do? How did this give them courage?

This story takes place in New Testament times, about ten years after Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven. It takes place in Ephesus, a city in the country that is now called Turkey.

Ephesus again! At last! It had been a year since Paul visited that city. On that last trip, many had gathered in the synagogue as Paul told them the gospel. They eagerly listened and believed. As Paul left town, the new believers pleaded with him, "Come back and stay longer!" How they wanted to learn more about Jesus!

"I will come back, if it is God's will," Paul promised. "I will leave my friends, Priscilla and Aquila, with you now to teach you more about Jesus," he told them.

It was God's will, so here was Paul, a year later, once more walking the marble-paved streets of Ephesus. He was eager to see the new believers; and, eager to tell more people of God's gracious love for sinners in Jesus.

And what a lot of people there were to tell! Ephesus was built at the crossroads of two great trade routes. Merchants from Asia, Europe and Africa passed through Ephesus to buy and sell their goods. If Paul told these people the good news of Jesus, they could take it back to their distant homes. How wonderful!

But the people of Ephesus, themselves, needed the gospel, too. Ephesus was a huge city of 200,000 people—one of the largest in the Roman Empire. There were over fifty different gods and goddesses worshiped in Ephesus, the greatest by far being the goddess Artemis. Her huge magnificent temple, four times the size of the huge Parthenon in Athens, drew thousands of worshipers each year. They came to offer sacrifices and to do wicked things that were supposed to please the great goddess. In return, they hoped she would make them rich and successful. At very least, Artemis made the silversmiths of Ephesus rich, for these men made their living selling small statues of

Artemis to thousands of worshippers.

Ephesus was also a great city for the buying and selling of magic spells. Many people lived in fear of evil spirits who they believed ruled in the heavenly places and had great power over their lives. People from all over came to Ephesus to buy magic spells to protect themselves from these spirits. The Jewish magicians were considered most powerful of all. They used the name of the LORD in their spells, a name so great that it was only to be spoken by the high priest, they told the people who bought their spells.

Paul knew what these men were doing was wicked! They were dishonoring the LORD and they were tricking men and women into thinking they could use the LORD's name to do what they wanted to do, as if He was some puppet. The LORD was definitely no puppet! He was the one, true God. He had long loved sinful people with His gracious love in Jesus. He had done so much more to rescue them from the power of Satan and the misery of their sins, than these people ever imagined! He reigned victoriously in the heavenly realms, over and above all. As Paul watched all the people in the agora (marketplace) buy the little statues and the magic spells, he was grieved. Oh, how badly someone needed to tell these Ephesians the truth! They would stay dead in their sins without it!

So that was exactly what Paul did when he came to Ephesus: preach the gospel! First in the Jewish synagogue, then in the Hall of Tyrannus, then house to house, Paul preached God's gracious love for sinners through Jesus: "God made us to know Him, but we have all rebelled against Him. Our hearts are dead to Him. We deserve His just punishment for our sins. and we cannot rescue ourselves," Paul told them.

"But from before the beginning of the world, God chose to save sinners through His Son, Jesus," Paul preached. "At just the right time, He sent Jesus to be the perfect sacrifice for their sins when He died upon the cross. God raised Jesus to life on the third day, showing that He had won victory over sin and death, for all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. They would be His dearly loved, adopted children forever," He told them.

"This is the good news God's gracious love for sinners in Jesus! Come, repent of your sins! Leave behind your idols and magic spells! Don't fear the evil spirits! Turn away from your old way of life! Trust in Jesus as your own Savior and be made new in Him! You can be God's adopted children,

too!" Paul urged them.

Paul's words were not just talk. The LORD backed up what Paul preached with "amazing miracles, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and they were healed.

When the Jewish magicians saw the power of Jesus' name, they added it to the spells they sold people But the LORD would not let His name be misused like that. He used their tricks to shame the magicians and to encourage many to turn away from magic and trust in Jesus. How powerful the name of Jesus was to overcome any evil!

News of what happened spread rapidly. Many believed in Jesus. They burned up 50,000 drachmas of magic scrolls in a bonfire--enough money to take care of a person for over a hundred years! Others stopped worshipping Artemis and the other idols.

Not everyone was pleased with what has happening in Ephesus. Demetrius, a leading maker of silver statues didn't like that less people were buying his statues. He stirred up an angry mob to kill Paul. Paul barely escaped Ephesus alive, but how he rejoiced at how many people had come to know God's gracious love for sinners through Christ Jesus!

That was the last time most of Ephesians were to see Paul. Angry Jews in Jerusalem arrested Paul for something he didn't do. He spent the next five years in suffering in Roman prisons. Life was difficult for the believers in Ephesus, too. Bad men began to teach that believers could worship the old gods and goddesses and still be Christians. Many were tempted to go back to some of the wicked things they used to do. Believers were not treating each other with love and honor as they should.

Word of the troubles in Ephesus reached Paul in prison. He couldn't go to them, but he could write. And so he did. Paul finished his letter, rolled it up and handed it to his faithful friend, Tychicus. "Take this letter to the Ephesians. Read it to them and encourage them in God's gracious love for them. Tell them that the Lord is keeping me well."

How happy the Ephesians were to see Tychicus and get news from Paul! They listened eagerly as he read Paul's letter to them: "To all the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus. Praise God for giving us every spiritual blessing in Christ. He chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. He chose us to be adopted as his children. He chose us for the praise of
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his glory. Your hearts were dead to God and you deserved His punishment for your sins. But because of His great love for us, He made us alive with Christ. He has forgiven our sins. He has filled us with His Holy Spirit. Our old way of living is gone! We have been made new in Jesus."

"We have even more to look forward to," Paul reminded them. "When our lives on earth were over, God will bring us to live with Him so we can enjoy Him completely and so He can shower us with His gracious love forever. I pray that you will understand more and more about how deep God's love is for you! And don't forget that God's love for us will show to all those evil spirits in the heavenly places you fear - -as well as all the good angels—the glorious, perfect wisdom of His plan for the world through Jesus."

"Hold on to these truths!" Paul urged them. As God's dear children, imitate Him in how you love each other. Sacrifice for each other! Honor and obey your God-given leaders! Don't follow anyone who teaches you lies and tells you that it's ok for Christians to worship idols and do magic. Fight against the devil's plans by having faith in God and living for Him. Know God's Word! Pray for each other! God will give you victory!"

Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers was a great encouragement to them. The Lord used his words to remind them of God's gracious love for them, from before the creation of the world. It helped them to fight against the lies of bad teachers and against sins in their own lives.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

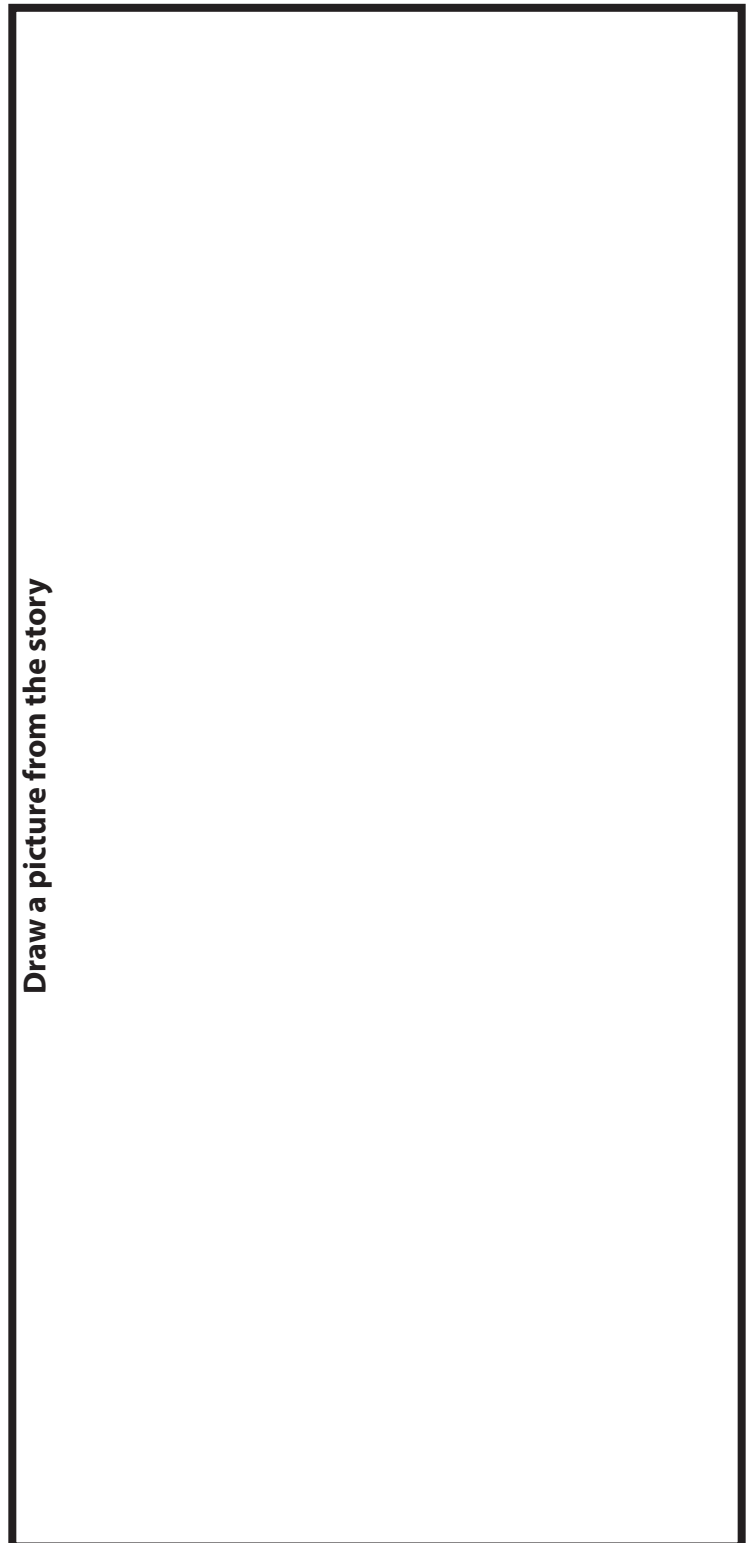
Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 1:4-6

"For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He favored us with in the Beloved."

Did you know, Paul's letter to the Ephesians has helped many more Christians than just those who gathered around Tychicus that day. Christians for thousands of years have been encouraged by it. Do you know how? It is one of the books in our Bibles! And of course, that means something for you and me, too.

It means that God wants us to know of His gracious love for sinners from before the creation of the world. He wants

trust in Jesus as our own Savior. He wants us to be some of His chosen, beloved children that can enjoy Him now through the Holy Spirit living in our hearts. And after we die, can live with Him, enjoying Him and being showered with His gracious love forever and ever. Let's praise God for loving sinful people, long before they ever loved Him. Let's ask Him to help us to confess our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior that we might be His very, own adopted children.



Draw a picture from the story

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: The best of God’s good gifts are those that God’s people know and receive. Answer: True! God is their Heavenly Father. They are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. They will get to live with Him forever. These gifts can be our when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who were the chosen? Who had chosen them, to be what? When did He chose them? Answer: The believers in Jesus (in general), but the believers in Ephesus (in this story). The Lord chose them to be His dear, adopted people, saved through Jesus. He did this before He even created the world.</p> <p>b. Why did they need courage? What did they take courage from? Answer: Others in Ephesus were persecuting them for being Christians. From knowing that God had chosen them and made them His dear, adopted people. He would take care of them in this life and one day, take them to be with Him forever in heaven.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6 “Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6, HCSB “For He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the ____, to be holy and blameless in His sight. In ____ He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to His favor and ____, to the praise of His glorious grace that He ____ us with in the Beloved.” Answers: world; love; will; favored.</p>	<p>Oh, How I Love Jesus <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 9</i></p> <p>Verse 1 There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth; It sounds as music in my ear, The sweetest name on earth.</p> <p>Oh, how I love Jesus, Oh, how I love Jesus, Oh, how I love Jesus, Because He first loved me.</p> <p>Words: Frederick Whitfield Music: Anonymous</p> <p>Through Jesus, God loved His people before they loved Him. He loved them while they were still sinners. He loved them even before the creation of the world. This makes God’s people so happy! They know that their sinful hearts would never choose God if He had loved them and chose them first. They know without God choosing to send Jesus to save them from their sins, they would never ever know God. This makes the name of Jesus the sweetest name on earth.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Chooser and Adopter of Your people through Jesus.</p> <p>C God, we confess that like the Ephesians we are sinners who need to turn away from our sins. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for loving Your people so completely, from even before the creation of the world. Thank You for making sure that they would be Your people by planning to give Your Son Jesus to save them.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Make us Your adopted children who will know You and love You forever.</p>	<p>For He Chose Us <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 10</i></p> <p>For He chose us in Him before the foundation, Before the foundation of the world, To be holy and blameless in his sight, Yes, he chose us before the foundation of the world. In love he predestined us to be adopted for Himself, Through Jesus Christ, According to His will and favor, Yes, In love He predestined us. Ephesians One, four and five.</p> <p>Words: Ephesians 1:4-5 HCSB Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>God loved His people long before they loved Him. He loved them and chose to adopt them as His people, even before He created (founded) the world. Why did He do this? Because it pleased Him to do it! It would show how wonderful He is and how great the good gifts He gives His people because of Jesus. We think of what He’s done and we praise Him for being so good to people like us. People who are sinners, but through Jesus, are made to be holy--without sin and without blame in His sight.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song:

1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV
"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three persons, but just one God. God could live forever happy, in the wonderful, perfect fellowship of love He has within Himself. He has never needed anything or anyone to be complete.

No, God didn't need anyone else to love, yet He chose to create people with a heart to know and love Him. He wanted to share Himself with these people--especially His people: all those who would ever turn and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

But even before He created the world, even before He created them, God knew that His love would be very, very costly. All people--including His people-- would rebel against Him. They would break fellowship with Him. They would deserve His punishment, not His love. Only a huge act of love on His part would rescue them. And right then, before the beginning, God chose to make it!

He chose to give His one, dear Son Jesus to take the punishment for their sins. So at just the right time, Jesus left the wonderful, perfect fellowship with God the Father and Holy Spirit in heaven and came to earth to live as a man. He lived the perfect life needed to please God. On the cross, He offered it up as the perfect sacrifice for sin. He took all the terrible punishment for the sins of God's people so they could be forgiven. Because of Jesus, they would get to know God and delight in His wonderful love.

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: 1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

CASE STORY

Numbers 21:4-9; 2 Kings 18:4; John 3:1-1

Our story is called:

The Case of the Lifted-Up Lifesaver.

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

1. Who was lifted up long before Jesus lived? How was that used as a lifesaver?
2. How was Jesus like what was lifted up? How was He a lifesaver?

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

Hot rocks, shadeless, scrubby bushes and heading south! What could be worse? That's what the Israelites thought as they headed back through the wilderness toward Elith. For thirty-eight, long years they had wandered those hot, deserted lands with their parents. Why? Because of their stubborn unbelief in the LORD. They refused to believe that the same great God who rescued them from the mighty Egyptians would also help them conquer the mighty enemies who lived in the Promised Land He was giving them.

"For forty years, you will wander through the wilderness until all you unbelieving adults die," the LORD had told them. "Your children will be the ones I take into the Promised Land, not you." So wander in the wilderness they did, year after year.

Now in the thirty-eighth year, the LORD was leading them to the banks of the Jordan River. Here they would settle for the last two years before entering the Promised Land at last.

There were two ways to get to their camping spot: a long way and a short way. The long way took them through more of that terrible, hot wilderness. But the short way took them through the pleasant, green lands of Edom. I bet you can guess which way the Israelites wanted to go: the short, pleasant, green way!

But this was not to be. The King Edom refused to let them pass through his country, no matter how much they pleaded. So it was back south through hot rocks and shadeless, scrubby bushes they had to go, many hundreds of miles out of their way.

The Israelites should have trusted the LORD. They should have remembered all He in love had done for them and trusted that there was a wise plan behind their journey south through the wilderness again. But they did not.

Instead they spoke against the LORD and Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable [manna]," they said.

What a terrible thing to say! What a terrible thing to do! To forget what the Lord in His love had done for them! Had He not done amazing miracles to rescue them from slavery in Egypt? Had He not loved them and made them His special people, even though there was nothing very lovable or special about them? Had He not kept His covenant promises to them even when they broke their covenant promises to Him? Had He not cared for them out in the wilderness, providing them with manna—bread from heaven— each day to eat and making delicious water gush forth from wilderness rocks? Had He not kept their clothes and sandals from wearing out all these 38 years? Hadn't He given them Moses to be their patient and wise leader? Yes, they should have remembered His love and trusted Him. But they did not; and the LORD now disciplined them again.

So from underneath those hot rocks and scruffy, shadeless bushes, He caused lots and lots of vicious, red striped snakes to come out and bite them. The bites swelled up and hurt terribly. What was worse, these snakes were deadly poisonous. The Israelites became very sick; many of them even died!

The people immediately knew why these snakes had come. They knew it was the LORD's just punishment for complaining instead of trusting God, yet again. How sorry they were! They came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that He take away the snakes from us," they pleaded.

Now, the LORD didn't have to do anything. He would have been completely just to let them die after how they had treated Him yet again. But the LORD was still full of love for His people. He chose to not punish them as their sins deserve. He offered a way to heal their bodies and save all who would trust in Him.

The LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery snake like the ones biting the people and set it on a pole. Everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

Moses did as the LORD said. He made a fiery-red snake out of reddish-colored bronze (the Hebrew actually says copper), set it on a pole and lifted it high in the sky for all

to see.

Word spread quickly through the camp: "The LORD has provided a way to save us! Look at the snake lifted up on the pole and live," they said. "The LORD will save from death all those who put their trust in Him."

Those who refused to look up to the snake died of their bites; but, those who showed their faith in the LORD by looking up to the snake were healed, just as God had promised.

The people praised the LORD. They deserved to die, but once more He had saved them. Moses wrote down the story of the lifted up snake in the Bible for all to remember. Others named the snake on the pole "Nehushtan" and kept it. God's people looked at it and remembered what in His love He had done for them. Through hundreds, even thousands of years God's people looked back to the story of the lifted up snake and remembered what God, in His love did for them.

Yet God had greater plans for the story of the lifted-up snake than for people to just marvel at what He, in His love, had done for His people. He planned for it to be a picture of the greatest display of His love that the world would ever know. A picture of how He would save not just His people's bodies from the consequences of their sin for awhile, but would send His dear, one and only Son, Jesus to save both their bodies and souls from sin forever. Jesus explained this to a great Jewish teacher named Nicodemus, late one night. Nicodemus had heard Jesus' powerful words about God. He had seen the amazing miracles Jesus had done. Nicodemus was sure God had sent Jesus to do something, but what? He had come through the dark and empty streets streets of Jerusalem to where Jesus was to find out more. Jesus told him what God in His love for His people planned to do next.

Jesus told Nicodemus: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man [the Messiah] must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

"Lifted up? Would the Messiah be lifted up like a snake on a pole? Who was this 'One and Only Son of God?'"

Nicodemus wondered. "Was Jesus saying talking about

himself?" Nicodemus tried to understand Jesus' words, but it was very hard. No one had ever spoken like Jesus did. No other rabbi (Jewish teacher) had taught that the Messiah would be lifted up."

Perhaps it became a lot clearer to Nicodemus a few years later as he and his fellow teacher, Joseph of Arimathea, looked up at Jesus' dead body lifted up high above them on the cross on the Friday Jesus died. And even clearer still, a few days later on the Sunday, when the amazing news spread that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Did Jesus' words echo in Nicodemus' head then? What had Jesus said? "...the Son of Man must be lifted up that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." Did Nicodemus understand what God in His love for His people had done? That God had loved His people from every language and nation in the whole world so much that He had not even held back the One He loved most to save them from their sins?

I can't answer that question for the Bible doesn't tell us what happened to Nicodemus. Only in heaven will we know. But I certainly hope that he came to believe that Jesus was the beloved Son of God, given up by His loving Father. I hope he put his trust in Jesus as His Savior, lifted up on the cross to suffer and die for God's people's sins.

Our Bible Truth is: God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Perhaps we can't know if Nicodemus understood what God in His great love for His people had done through Jesus; but, there is someone else who can know: you and me! God has let us hear the story of the bronze snake. He has let us understand that in His great love, He gave His only Son Jesus to be lifted up to suffer and die on the cross so that you and I, if we confess our sins, turn from them, and believe in Him, will not perish but have eternal life. Let's praise God for His great love for sinners. Let's ask Him to give us faith to believe in His Son Jesus as our own Savior.

Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God made people because He was lonely all by Himself.
 Answer: False. God has always lived forever happy in the wonderful, perfect fellowship of His love.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was lifted up long before Jesus lived? How was that used as a lifesaver?

Answer: A bronze snake. The LORD promised to save from the deadly snakebites all who looked to the snake on the pole. The snake had no power. God counted it as an act of faith in Him when people obeyed His command and looked to the snake.

b. How was Jesus like what was lifted up? How was He a lifesaver?

Answer: Jesus was lifted up on a cross. He suffered and died for the sins of all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him. He is the only way any of us can be saved. He saves us for eternal life.

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

1 John 4:10

"In this is ____, not that we have loved ____ but that he loved us and sent his ____ to be the propitiation for our sins."

Answers: love; God; Son.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 11

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 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.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Great Lover and Savior of Your undeserving people.

C God, we confess that many times, like the Israelites, we grumble against You, even though You has treated us so much better than we deserve. We deserve Your punishment, but You have given us a Savior!

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.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Fill our hearts with love for You and thankfulness for all You have done for Your people.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

This Is Love

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 13

This is love,
 Not that we loved God,
 But that He, that he loved us,
 He sent his Son,
 And He sent His Son,
 The propitiation for our sins.
 He sent his Son,
 And He sent His Son,
 The propitiation for our sins.
 First John Four, ten.

Words adapted from 1 John 4:10, ESV Music: Constance Dever © 2012

We are all sinners who have rebelled against God, yet God chose to love us and do it in the deepest way possible: He sent Jesus to save us. Yes, He sent His dearly loved Son, to come to earth to be the atoning sacrifice that would pay for our sins. He would live a perfect life then offer it up as the payment that would bring the forgiveness we needed. And He chose to do this while we still were rebelling against Him! How wonderful is this free gift of God! How deep is His love! This atoning sacrifice is for us, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song:

1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV
"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three persons, but just one God. God could live forever happy, in the wonderful, perfect fellowship of love He has within Himself. He has never needed anything or anyone to be complete.

No, God didn't need anyone else to love, yet He chose to create people with a heart to know and love Him. He wanted to share Himself with these people--especially His people: all those who would ever turn and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

But even before He created the world, even before He created them, God knew that His love would be very, very costly. All people--including His people-- would rebel against Him. They would break fellowship with Him. They would deserve His punishment, not His love. Only a huge act of love on His part would rescue them. And right then, before the beginning, God chose to make it!

He chose to give His one, dear Son Jesus to take the punishment for their sins. So at just the right time, Jesus left the wonderful, perfect fellowship with God the Father and Holy Spirit in heaven and came to earth to live as a man. He lived the perfect life needed to please God. On the cross, He offered it up as the perfect sacrifice for sin. He took all the terrible punishment for the sins of God's people so they could be forgiven. Because of Jesus, they would get to know God and delight in His wonderful love.

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: 1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Peace-Maker.

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

1. Who was at war? How did they make peace?
2. How did Don use the tribes' peace maker to tell the people about Jesus?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place in the 1960's in Irian Jaya, the home of the Sawi peoples.

The Sawis lived very simple lives. They wore almost no clothes. Their tools and weapons were made from sticks, stones and bones. They lived in huts of cane pole and straw built on stilts high up off the swampy jungle ground. They ate beetle grubs, sago palm tree bread, and wild pig...and sometimes they even ate their enemies! Yes, the terrible truth was that the Sawis were cannibals—people who eat people!

There were many Sawi tribes in Irian Jaya, but this story is about the Sawi of Haenam village. These Sawi were fierce warriors. Many proudly wore grass skirts--the symbol that they had killed a man in battle. They wore long necklaces of teeth from the crocodiles, wild pigs and dogs they killed. They took delight in tricking their enemies with lies. In Haenam village, no one was honored more than Mahaen, Kani, Maum, Giriman, Nair, and Warahai. These warriors were feared by the other Sawi for their many terrible, deadly tricks.

The other Sawis had another reason to honor Haenam village. They had Tuans living among them! What are Tuans? Tuans were large beings like them, but with dazzling, white skin, the Sawis said. Their hair wasn't dark and curly hair like the Sawis. It was straight or wavy, and many different colors. They covered their bodies in colorful skins. No one had ever seen a female Tuan, so maybe there were only males, some said.

Tuans seemed to be friendly. They didn't want to hurt others, but they carried powerful weapons that could kill and made a very loud noise. They had strong, shiny tools, too, that could easily cut through the trunk of a sago palm tree. They even had magical powders that when rubbed on skin could make it come clean; and others, when eaten, could heal sores and sicknesses. What were Tuans? Monsters? No, they were white-skinned people from

the United States, who had come to Irian Jaya with guns, modern tools and medicines.

One day, a Tuan man named Don came by dugout canoe to Haenam. At first everyone hid in their huts in fear; but then using the few words of Sawi he knew, he greeted the people and told them he had come to live with them as friends. He was bringing his wife and little boy to live there, too. He promised he would give them some of his wonderful shiny tools if they would help him build a house for his family. His wife would come and bring powders to heal their sicknesses. First the warriors, then the women and children came out of their huts. Fear quickly turned to excitement as they eyed the Tuan's shiny tools.

The warriors and Don built the house quickly, then Don went to get Carol and Stephen, his wife and son. "So there were Tuan females after all...and little boys, too!" the Sawis thought. "And this Tuan female had the special powders to heal sicknesses!" The people whooped and danced around them in excitement. They had Tuans and none of the other villages did!

Tuan Don and Carol were glad to heal the sick Sawi people and give them iron tools to make their lives easier, but they had come to tell them about Jesus. Day after day they learned more of the Sawi language so they could tell them this best of news.

Tuan Don knew enough Sawi to tell them. Early one morning, he climbed up the notched pole and entered the man-house (the long cane pole house where all the men held meetings). All the warriors of Haenam waited for him: even great Mahaen, Kani, Maum, Giriman, Nair, and Warahai. And there, in that room filled with weapons, grass mats, smoldering, smoky fires and cobwebs, Tuan Don began: "I have a true story about the Myao Kodon "the greatest Spirit. Myao Kodon is the great God who is everywhere, all the time," Tuan Don told them. "He knows everything there is to know. He even knows everything you are thinking inside your head. He keeps everything going: the sun, the moon, the wind, the growing plants... even you. There would be no life without Him."

The warriors were amazed at Tuan Don's story. They had never heard anything like this!

Tuan Don went on: "Myao Kodon is all loving and good. He created people to obey Him and delight in His love, but they rebelled against Him. They chose to do things their own way. Hate has filled their hearts. As Myao Kodon's

enemies they deserved to die. He could have put them to death right then, but He did not. He chose to send His Son Jesus to deliver them instead."

"Jesus came to earth," Don told them. "He taught people about Myao Kodon and the work He gave Him to do to save people. He never did anything wrong. He would be the perfect payment for His people's sins."

"When the time came for Jesus to die, God allowed Judas, one of Jesus' closest friends to play a big trick on Jesus so that wicked men could catch him and kill Him," Don told them. "These men had Jesus nailed to a tree to suffer and die. And while He suffered and died, Jesus took the punishment for all the sins of all who would ever turn and trust in Him. He was buried in a tomb, but on the third day, Myao Kodon raised Jesus back to life! Now He would live and reign forever in heaven with Myao Kodon. He had won His victory!"

"This is the message Myao Kodon has sent us to tell you," Don exclaimed. "You are living as enemies with God. You deserve His punishment, but if you confess your sins to God and trust in Jesus, He will forgive you and you can know and enjoy Him forever. Come! Turn away from your sins! Trust in Jesus, Myao Kodon's Son!"

The warriors laughed and clapped when Don finished. "Good story! Judas played a great tuwi asonai-- treacherous trick!--on Jesus! We like him!

Tuan Don was so disappointed! How would the Sawi ever hear the good news of Jesus? Only God knew! So Tuan Don and Carol prayed: "Lord, please show us how to tell these people the good news of Jesus."

God answered Tuan Don and Carol's prayers in a very unexpected way: through a terrible Sawi war.

The women were sounded the war alarm. "Boom, boom, boom" they beat on trees with long sticks. A Haeman boy called a man named Ama, from the Sawi village of Kamur, a "lizard skin." Ama was furious. Soon the air was filled with war cries and arrows. It was war!

The war went on for months. Many men were hurt and killed. Don and Carol cared for the injured men and prayed that God would bring an end to the war. They begged Mahaen, Kani and the other warriors to stop the war, but each time the answer was "no."

At last Tuan Don threatened to leave Haemen if the war did not end. Mahaen did not want his village to lose the medicines, tools and honor Tuan Don gave them.

"Tomorrow, Tuan Don, the war will stop. We will have "cool water" (peace) tomorrow. I promise," Mahaen told him. "Now I must go. There is much to do."

Tuan Don watched Mahaen go, little guessing how much it would cost him to stop the war. He would have to give his son as a tarop tim---a peace child.

The next day, the warriors from each tribe faced each other in two long lines. The women and children gathered around, too. They all watched as Mahaen took Mani, his little baby son from his wife's arms. She wailed and fell to the ground in sobs of sadness. A man named Kaiyo from Kamur brought his little son Biakadonm, too. The villagers from Haenam laid hands on little Mani. The villagers from Kamur laid hands on little Biakadon. Then the babies were given to a chosen man of the enemy tribe.

"As long as these peace children, Mani and Biakadon live, there will be peace between our tribes," the warriors promised. A great cry of joy went up. The war was over. Peace had come at last.

Don and Carol were amazed at what they heard: fathers who gave their own, dearly loved sons to make peace with their enemies. Didn't that sound like what God had done by giving Jesus? God had answered their prayers at last. He had given them the key to telling the Sawis the good news of salvation.

Tuan Don gathered warriors together in the man-house again, but this time He told them of Jesus, the peace child: "Myao Kodon loved His Son more than anyone else," Don explained. "But He gave Him up to be the peace child for all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Come! Turn away from your sins! Trust in Jesus as your peace child!"

This time the warriors understood. The Holy Spirit worked powerfully in the Sawi who lived in Haenam and many other villages. Hundreds of Sawis, including Mahaen and Kani and the two peace children from the war, Biakodon and Mani, confessed their sins to Myao Kodon and trusted in Jesus as their own peace child (Savior). Today, many Sawis now travel to other parts of Irian Jaya and even other parts of the world to share the message of the God's love for sinners in sending His Son Jesus to save them.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Showed the Depths of His Love

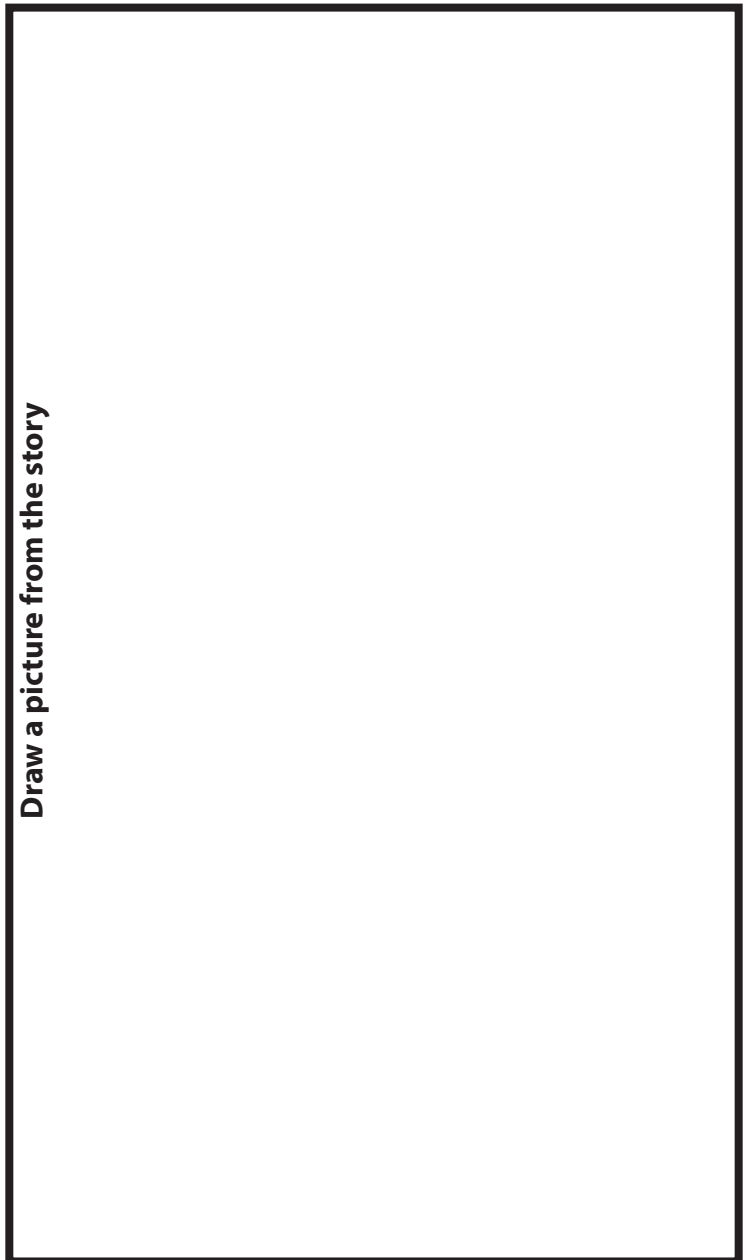
By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 4:10:

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

What about you and me? It is easy to see how different we are from the Sawis, but do we see we are very much like them, too? Don't we have hearts that rebel against God? Don't we need Jesus to be the peace child that brings us to God? We do! Let's praise God for giving us His Son to make peace between Him and us. Let's ask Him to help us to see our sins and turn and trust in Jesus. Let's ask Him to help us bravely spread this wonderful message to others.

Draw a picture from the story



<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: Even before the beginning of the world, God knew that His people who rebel against Him and need to be saved by Him. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who was at war? How did they make peace? Answer: Two Sawi tribes. They made peace by giving a son from the tribe to the other tribe. As long as the son lived, the peace was kept.</p> <p>b. How did Don use the tribes' peace maker to tell the people about Jesus? Answer: He told them that Jesus was God's Son, the peace child sent to make peace between sinful people and God.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: 1 John 4:10 "In this is love, ___ that we have loved God but that ___ loved us and sent his Son to be the ___ for our sins." Answers: not; he; propitiation.</p>	<p>To God Be the Glory <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 11</i></p> <p>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.</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 Crosby Music: William H. Doane</p> <p>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.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p align="center"><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Great Lover and Savior of Your undeserving people. People who were at war with You by being sinners, but whom You have loved and wanted to make Your dearly loved people.</p> <p>C God, we confess that we all are enemies with You, by nature. We all deserve Your punishment for rebelling against You and Your good ways. We need a Savior to make peace between You and us.</p> <p>T God, we thank You for answering Your people's prayers to help them tell others the good news of Jesus. Thank You for sending Jesus to make peace and forgiveness of sins possible.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Send out Your people to every part of the world, that all might hear and believe the good news of Jesus.</p>	<p>This Is Love <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 13</i></p> <p>This is love, Not that we loved God, But that He, that he loved us, He sent his Son, And He sent His Son, The propitiation for our sins. He sent his Son, And He sent His Son, The propitiation for our sins. First John Four, ten. Words adapted from 1 John 4:10, ESV Music: Constance Dever © 2012</p> <p>We are all sinners who have rebelled against God, yet God chose to love us and do it in the deepest way possible: He sent Jesus to save us. Yes, He sent His dearly loved Son, to come to earth to be the atoning sacrifice that would pay for our sins. He would live a perfect life then offer it up as the payment that would bring the forgiveness we needed. And He chose to do this while we still were rebelling against Him! How wonderful is this free gift of God! How deep is His love! This atoning sacrifice is for us, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three persons, but just one God. God could live forever happy, in the wonderful, perfect fellowship of love He has within Himself. He has never needed anything or anyone to be complete.

No, God didn't need anyone else to love, yet He chose to create people with a heart to know and love Him. He wanted to share Himself with these people--especially His people: all those who would ever turn and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

But even before He created the world, even before He created them, God knew that His love would be very, very costly. All people--including His people-- would rebel against Him. They would break fellowship with Him. They would deserve His punishment, not His love. Only a huge act of love on His part would rescue them. And right then, before the beginning, God chose to make it!

He chose to give His one, dear Son Jesus to take the punishment for their sins. So at just the right time, Jesus left the wonderful, perfect fellowship with God the Father and Holy Spirit in heaven and came to earth to live as a man. He lived the perfect life needed to please God. On the cross, He offered it up as the perfect sacrifice for sin. He took all the terrible punishment for the sins of God's people so they could be forgiven. Because of Jesus, they would get to know God and delight in His wonderful love.

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: 1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

CASE STORY

*Proverbs 8:30; Isaiah 41:2; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 26-28;
John 1:1-18; 3:16; 17:25; Ephesians 1:1-14*

Our story is: The Case of the Matchless Marvel.

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

1. Who was matchless in His love?
2. What did He do that was such a marvel (so amazing that we can hardly believe it)??

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus came to earth to live. It is a story like none other. It is about a love so deep, so high, and so wide that it can't be measured. A love so beautiful and perfect that no one could ever repeat it. An absolutely matchless love. Who is this love story about? It is about God the Father's love for His Son, Jesus.

From forever past--long before this world was created-- God the Father loved His Son with this beautiful, perfect love. The Son was the Father's Chosen One and His Spirit delighted in Him daily. The Son rejoiced before His Father always. The Father's love for His Son was matchless--greater by far than His love for anything or anyone else. It was more than we can ever imagine. He held the Son in His bosom-- the deepest, dearest part of His heart--where they could share in complete closeness. They were one; and every moment was filled with Perfect Wonderfulness.

What would you do if you loved someone with this kind of matchless love? What would you do if you enjoyed such Perfect Wonderfulness with them? You wouldn't give them up for anything, would you?

But do you know what God the Father did with His beloved Son? He gave Him up. And He didn't just give Him up to friends. He gave Him up to His enemies. And what is even more surprising, He gave Him up to His enemies to suffer all of God the Father's terrible wrath for their sins, so they could be forgiven and become His own sons and daughters!

Why would God the Father do such a thing? Did someone make Him do this? Nope. He chose to do it freely--it was His own good pleasure and will. And it wasn't just God the Father who chose to do this. God the Son loved His Father with the same, matchless love. He rejoiced to fulfill His Father's plan, even though He would have to suffer so much.

But do you see what all this means? This love story isn't just about God the Father's love for His Son. It is also about

God's marvelous love for His people. Oh, how much He chose to endure and suffer to save them! So at just the right time, God gave His Son out of His bosom—the deepest, dearest part of His heart-- and He began to form as a tiny human baby inside of Mary. Jesus was still completely the Son of God, but now also He was completely human, too.

So, on just the right night, Jesus was born near Bethlehem and placed in a manger of straw. Angels announced God's wonderful plan of salvation. People rejoiced at the good news of salvation. But it was not all easy and happy, this plan of salvation. Even the night Jesus was born, it was Mary's little human arms that held Jesus close to her heart. God the Father had given Jesus out of His bosom to save His people, choosing less closeness for their sake.

When Jesus grew up, it was time to tell everyone about God's Kingdom. Before He began, He went to John the Baptist to be baptized at the Jordan River. Down in the water He went, then back up again. As He came up, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove. The Father watched everything His Son was doing. His heart was filled with love and perfect satisfaction for Him. He spoke from heaven saying, "This is My Son, whom I love. With Him I am well pleased!"

Some people agreed. They heard Jesus' words. They saw the amazing things Jesus did. They believed that He was God's Son, the Messiah, come to save them. They followed Him and learned from Him.

But many more rejected Jesus. "God has no Son. God is only God the Father," they said to Him. "You are a liar. If you are anyone's son, you are Satan's son. He's the one giving you power to do the amazing things you do." They plotted to capture Him and have Him put to death on a cross.

None of this surprised God the Father or Jesus, the Son of God. God knew this was what these people would do. God had woven it all into His good and wise plan. He would use even these wicked deeds to glorify Himself and to bring salvation to His sinful people. It was wonderful what God would do, but it was not easy or all happy. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit knew how much Jesus would suffer!

The closer the day when Jesus would die came, the harder it was for Him to keep going! The night before He was to die on the cross, Jesus fell face down to the ground and prayed: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup—this terrible time of suffering and death—be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."

Can you imagine how the Father felt? This was not just anyone suffering! This was His Son whom He had delighted in and had loved from forever past. The Father certainly had the power to rescue Jesus and remove Him from the suffering that lay before Him. Thousands of angels stood ready to come to His rescue. He could have taken Him out of the world right then and there and brought Him back into the deepest, dearest closeness of His bosom. Jesus could have chosen not to suffer, but both kept to the plan. Only this terrible path of suffering and death would save God's people. So as hard as it was, the Father and the Son were pleased to complete this glorious, wise plan; this gift of indescribable love for His people.

Judas, one of Jesus' close disciples, led soldiers to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was praying, greeting Him with a brotherly kiss. The soldiers seized Jesus; and all His friends ran away, leaving Him to His enemies and death.

All the rest of the night, the Jews and Romans questioned Jesus, insulted Him and hurt Him. In the morning, they gathered a crowd where the Roman leader, Pilate was making a final decision about Jesus. "What shall I do with Jesus, called the Messiah?" Pilate asked.

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" they shouted angrily.

Pilate agreed. Soldiers took Jesus away. They put a scarlet robe on Him and pressed a crown of long, twisted thorns down on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on Him and took the staff and struck him with it. They took away the robe, then led him away and crucified Him.

Jesus suffered terribly! Crowds shook their heads at Him and insulted Him: "Come down from the cross, if You are the Son of God!" some said.

The worst Jesus had to suffer now came. And from whom? From God the Father, Himself-- the very One who loved Jesus with a matchless love. Just as planned, God the Father poured out His terrible wrath upon His Son. On Him, He laid all of the punishment for the sins of His people—all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

As the weight of the Father's wrath crushed His dear Son, Jesus felt completely separated from His Father. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me!" He cried out in anguish. Oh, what pain! Oh, what separation! Yes, for Jesus,

but also for God the Father. This was His Son who He was separating from Himself with His wrath for His people's sins! His Son who had dwelt in His bosom—the deepest, dearest part of His love—from forever past! How great His grief must have been to treat His Son this way! Yet He loved His sinful people so much that He was even willing to do this.

At last it was over. Jesus had taken all God's punishment for His people's sins. "It is finished," Jesus cried out. "Into Your hands I commit My spirit," He told His Father as He died. Friends came and took His body. They laid it in a tomb and rolled a stone in front of it.

This seemed to be the end of the Son of God, but of course it was not. The wise and glorious plan had worked! Jesus had beaten death! It couldn't keep Him in the grave! On the third day, God the Father raised Him to life again. How His disciples rejoiced!

But there was even greater joy in heaven. For after forty days, Jesus rose to heaven to be with His Father. Once more the Father drew Jesus in His bosom—into the deepest, dearest part of His heart. Once more God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit delighted in the fullness of Perfect Wonderfulness as before.

But there was even more. For God had so loved the world that He had given His only Son that whoever believed in Him would not perish, but have eternal life. Now in Jesus, God the Father drew all of His people into His bosom—into the deepest, dearest part of His heart. All the days of their lives they would know His love in their hearts. And one day, they would go to live with Him forever, being filled up completely with enjoy Him, the wonderful, glorious, infinite God forever more.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

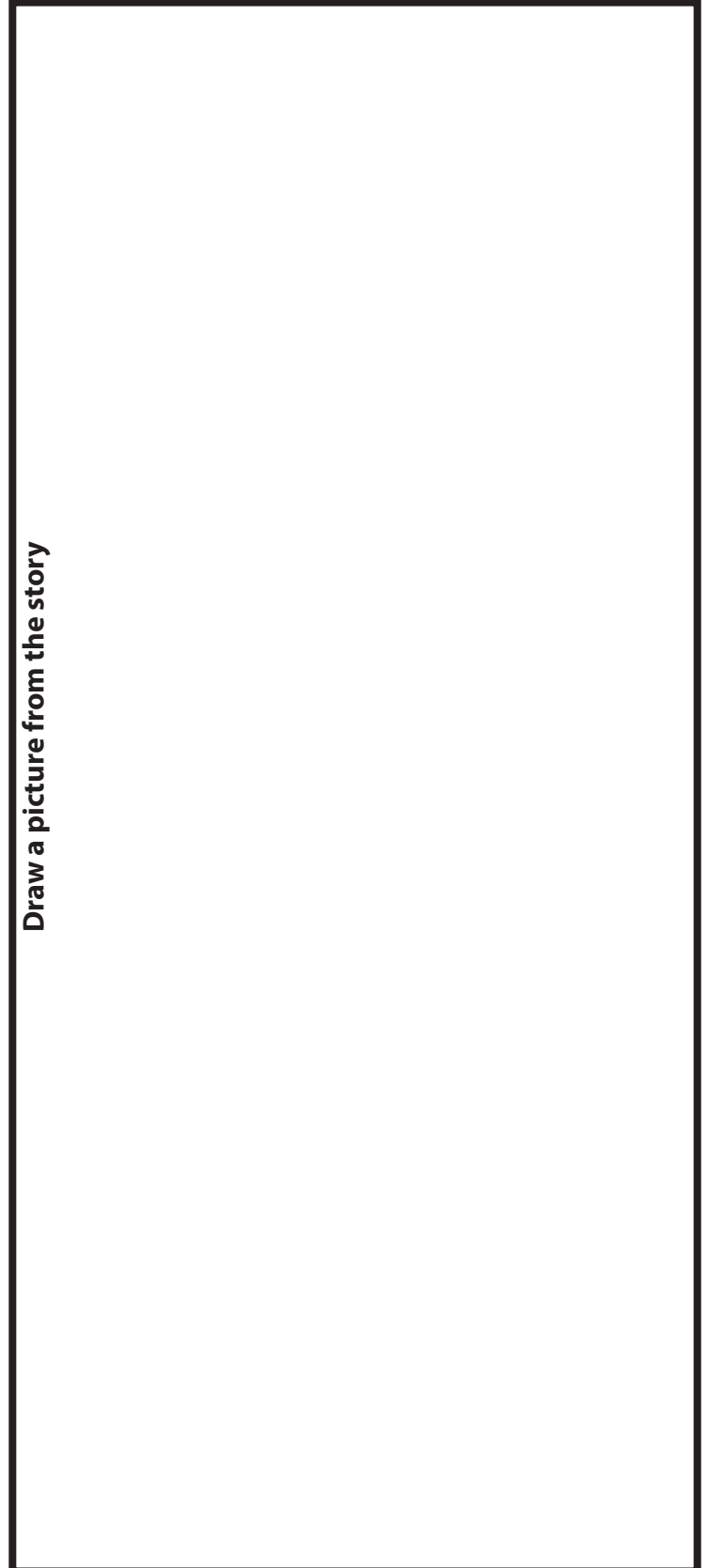
Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

How great is the love of God the Father for His Son Jesus! How great is His love for His people, that He would endure such suffering for them! What should you and I think about this? What should we do? We should be amazed that God would love any of us like this! We should praise God for freely giving His Son to save sinful people like us. We

should ask Him to forgive our sins and ask Him to be our own Savior. We should ask Him to help us never forget how deep His love is and to show us how we can live our lives to please Him as the only "thank you" we have for all that He has done for His sinful people.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God saved His people at a very high cost to Himself! Jesus, the Son of God, had to suffer and die for their sins in order for them to be His people. Answer: True! And we can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions</p> <p>a. Who was matchless in His love? Answer: God was matchless in His love for His Son, Jesus. But also in His love for sinners, like you and me.</p> <p>b. What did He do that was such a marvel (so amazing that we can hardly believe it)? Answer: He gave His Son, whom He loved so much, to suffer and die for sinners like you and me, that all who might turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, would be forgiven their sins and be saved. He would adopt them into His family and treat them with the same love as He does His dear, Son, Jesus.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: 1 John 4:10 "In this is love, not that ___ have loved God but that he loved ___ and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our ___" Answers: we; us; sins.</p>

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN
<p>To God Be the Glory <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 11</i></p> <p>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.</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 Crosby Music: William H. Doane</p> <p>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.</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 Great Lover and Savior of Your undeserving people. People You wanted to make Your dearly loved people so much that You chose to send Jesus, Your dear Son to die to save them.</p> <p>C God, we confess that we all choose not to love You. None of us deserve to be Your people. None of us can be saved by our own goodness. We deserve Your punishment. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for loving Your people so much that You would send Jesus to suffer more than anyone could ever suffer to save sinful people like us!</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Fill our hearts with love for You.</p>

BIBLE VERSE SONG
<p>This Is Love <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 13</i></p> <p>This is love, Not that we loved God, But that He, that he loved us, He sent his Son, And He sent His Son, The propitiation for our sins. He sent his Son, And He sent His Son, The propitiation for our sins. First John Four, ten.</p> <p>Words adapted from 1 John 4:10, ESV Music: Constance Dever © 2012</p> <p>We are all sinners who have rebelled against God, yet God chose to love us and do it in the deepest way possible: He sent Jesus to save us. Yes, He sent His dearly loved Son, to come to earth to be the atoning sacrifice that would pay for our sins. He would live a perfect life then offer it up as the payment that would bring the forgiveness we needed. And He chose to do this while we still were rebelling against Him! How wonderful is this free gift of God! How deep is His love! This atoning sacrifice is for us, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song:

1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV
"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4: **God Loves His People by Caring for Their Needs**

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

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

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

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Pslam 23:1-6, ESV

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

CASE STORY

Daniel 3

Our story is called:

The Case of the Unbending Knees.

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

1. Whose knees would not bend? Why?
2. What happened because they would not bend? Who rescued them?

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

Enemy kings with powerful armies surrounded the little land of Judah. King Asurbanipol of Assyria, King Nabopolassar of Babibli, Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, and King Kyaxares of Medes. They were all there and all hungry for more land, more peoples, more riches.

The people of Judah wondered what would happen to them. Would their enemies attack and destroy the Temple to the LORD? Would they carry them away as slaves? The people of Judah waited in fear to find out.

If the people had listened to the messages the LORD had sent through his prophets, Habbakuk, Urijah and Jeremiah, they would have known the answers to their questions. Hadn't Jeremiah stood right in the courtyard of the Temple and given them the LORD's final message: "If you don't follow My laws or listen to the words of My prophets, then I will have the Temple and this city destroyed," He warned.

Unfortunately, they didn't repent and now they faced the painful discipline of their loving God. "The armies of Babibli are coming," the LORD told through His prophets. "They will ruin your land and everything in it. They will take you away to be their servants. This is how I am disciplining you, my wayward, stiff-necked people! You will be the slaves of the king of Babibli. I want you to serve him and his people for seventy years. Do this and you will live," He urged them.

Yet even while disciplining His rebellious people, the LORD showed them great kindness: "At the end of the seventy years, I will rescue you. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land again. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'" (from Jeremiah 27:12; Ezekiel 37:13-14)

Before long, it all happened as the LORD had promised. Prince Nabu-kudurru-usur of Babibli with all his father's armies, swept down into Judah and conquered the land. He told them to take all riches of Judah. "Take all gold, silver,

and bronze things out of the Temple," he told them. "We will put them in the temple of Marduk, our god," the prince told them. "Then pick out the smartest, most handsome, young men from the best families in Judah. They will be servants to King Nabopolassar, my father," he said. So the soldiers loaded up carts of beautiful things from the Temple. They gathered up the best young men and set off across the hot, dry wilderness to Bababli.

Daniel, Amaziah, Hananiah and Mishael were young men picked out by the soldiers. How hard it must have been to be forced to leave their families, friends and homeland and become servants of their enemy, King Nabopolassar! Yet, these men went bravely. Why? Because unlike many people of Judah, these men loved the LORD. They remembered His promises to take care of them, even in Babibli. So as they marched away into slavery, these men trusted the LORD to care for them.

And so the LORD did. The king took away their Jewish names and gave them new names to honor his gods. Daniel became Belteshazzar. Hanaiah became Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and, Azariah, Abednego. He made them go to school to learn about the customs of Babibli and train to be his servants. He even tried to make them eat the food from his table—food sacrificed to his gods. The king wanted them to forget the LORD and worship Marduk instead.

Daniel, Azariah, Mischael, Hananiah worked hard for the king, just as the LORD told them to, but never did they forget the LORD. They even chose to eat animal feed rather than the king's delicious food sacrificed to his gods. Even there, far away from home, did they forget the LORD's promise to rescue them. They kept on trusting on Him to provide everything they needed, and the LORD greatly blessed them.

While these young men were in school, King Nabopolassar died and his son, Nabu-kudurru-usur became king. Ashpenaz brought Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego before the new king to be interviewed, King Nabukudurru-usur was most impressed. These young men were ten times wiser than the wisest men who served him already! Daniel could even tell the meaning to dreams! He gave them some of the most important jobs in his whole government.

King Nabopolassar had been great, but now his son, The music sounded and all the important men fell face down

and worshiped the image. All that is, except Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. these young men loved the LORD and would worship Him only. Some astrologers noticed what they were doing. and went to tell the king.

The king was furious. He ordered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be brought before him for questioning. "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? I'm giving you another chance. The musicians will play again, if you fall down and worship the image, very good. But if you don't, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could save their lives if they would worship the image, but they chose to keep on worshiping the LORD and trust Him to take care of their needs.

"O Nabu-kudurru-usur, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king," they told the king. "But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold."

The king was furious! He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual (and that must have been very hot, indeed, for the furnaces of Babibli were known to be heated up to over 1000 degrees F!) Some of his strongest soldiers tied up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and threw them into the blazing furnace. The heat from the fire killed the soldiers, but what of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? The king looked in the fire and in amazement at what he saw.

"Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." God had sent an angel—or perhaps Jesus Himself—to protect these men!

King Nabu-kudurru-usur then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the king's important men crowded around them amazed: the fire had not harmed them at all—not their robes their bodies or even a hair on their head!

Then Nabu-kudurru-usur said, "Praise be to the God of

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that anyone who speaks against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be punished by me, for no other god can save in this way.”

Our Bible Truth is:**God Loves His People By Caring For Their Needs****Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 23:1-6**

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

God took care of every one of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s needs. By His Holy Spirit He strengthened their hearts to keep worshipping Him alone and to boldly proclaim Him as the one, true God. He took care of their bodies’ needs with animal feed. He even rescued them from a fiery death.

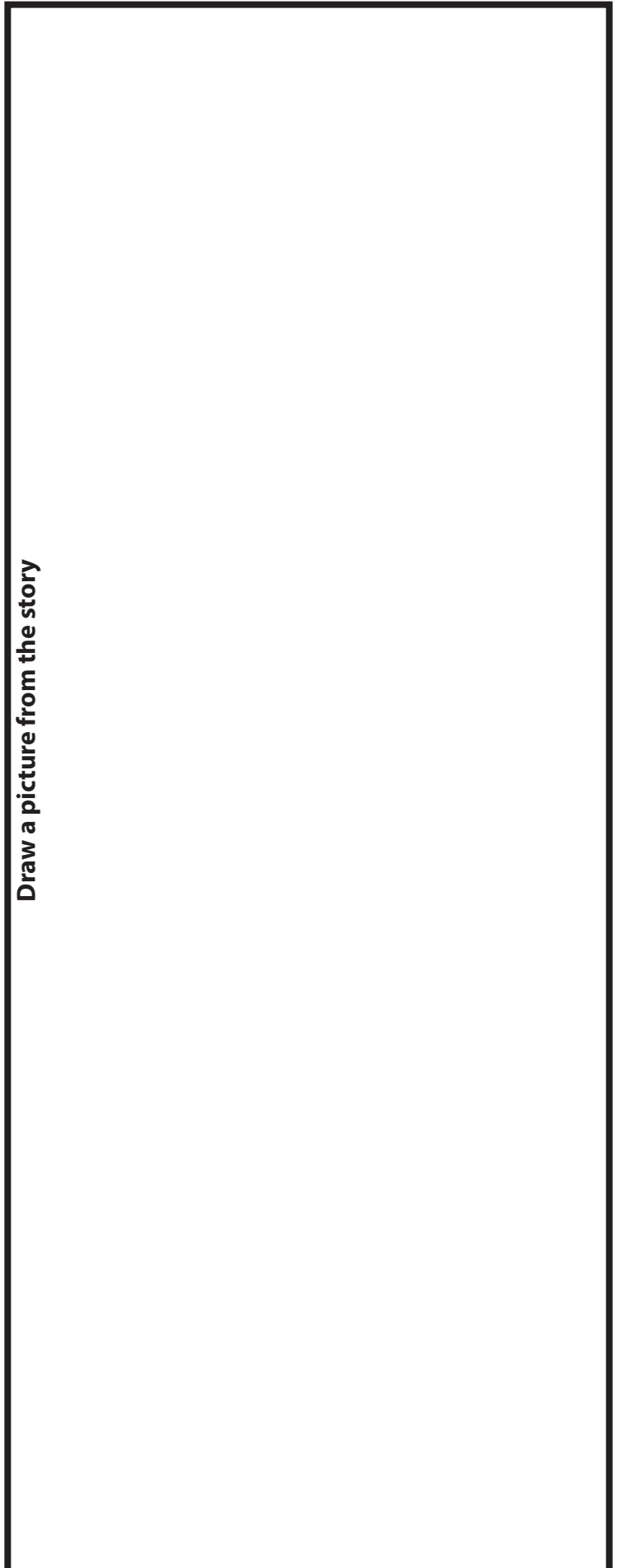
But what about you and me? Can we trust God to take care of all our needs, too? If we are God’s people— those who turn away from our sinful ways and trust Jesus as our Savior—then we, too, can know God will take care of our needs just exactly as is best, every, single day of our lives.

Let’s praise God for loving His people and giving them what they need. Let’s ask Him to help us, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, to think first of all about honoring the Lord and trusting Him, as our loving Father, to take care of all our needs as He knows best.

NOTE

Since this is such a familiar story to most children, I used Babibli, the Babylonian word for Babylon; and Nabu-kudurr-usur, the Babylonian word for Nebuchadnezzar. Feel free to substitute back in the English versions, if you desire.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God is the most wonderful Father anyone could ever imagine. He can be our heavenly Father when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

Answer: True!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Whose knees would not bend? Why?

Answer: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's knees. They refused to bow down and worship the king's statue. They would only worship the LORD.

b. What happened because they would not bend? Who did they trust to rescue them? Did he?

Answer: They were thrown into a fiery furnace to die. The LORD. Yes! He did!.

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

Psalms 23:1-6

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

Answers: shepherd; waters; evil; mercy.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 14,15

Verse 1

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

Verse 4

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

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

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

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being able to perfectly care for Your people, no matter what.

C God, we confess that many times, like the people of Judah, we choose to rebel against You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being with Your people, and always being able to care for their needs.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Take care of our needs and help us to trust You and live for You, even when it is very hard.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Is My Shepherd

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 16

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul,
He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of death,
I will fear no evil.

Why? For You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me,
In the presence of my enemies,
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me,
All of the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD,
Forever and ever and ever.
Psalm Twenty-three.

Words adapted from Psalm 23:1-6, ESV Constance Dever © 2012

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

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

God Loves His People by Caring for Their Needs

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

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

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

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Pslam 23:1-6, ESV

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

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Penniless, Rich Man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Our Bible Truth is:

God Loves His People By Caring For Their Needs

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

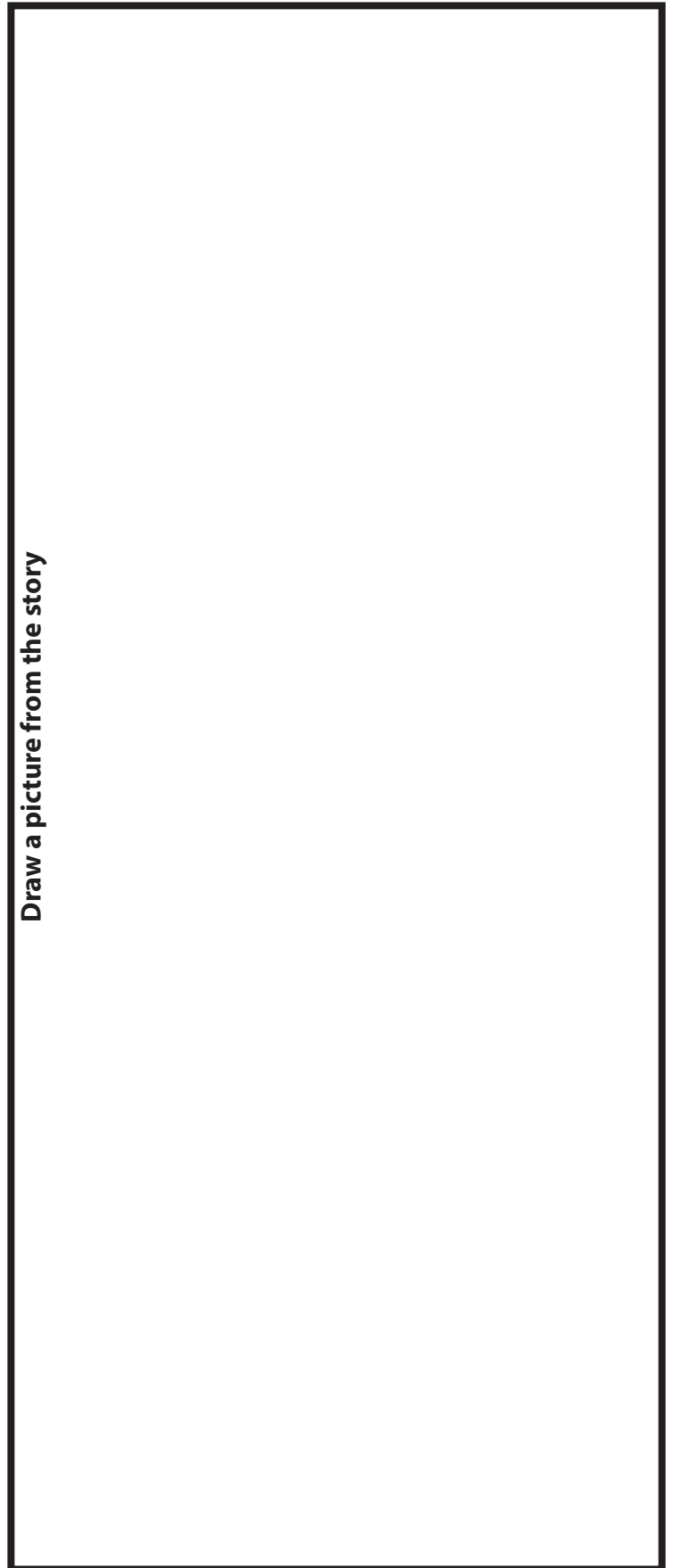
"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;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

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

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

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

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



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God has taken care of all of His people’s needs, even their greatest need for a Savior.
 Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Penniless, Rich Man? How did he choose to be penniless? Why? Hudson Taylor. He chose to ask
 Answer: God in prayer for what he needed in order to grow his trust in God’s ability to provide all he needed when he would be all alone in China.

b. Who made him rich? How?
 Answer: God made him rich. Not rich with a lot of money, but rich by providing everything he needed when he needed it.

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

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love
PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 14,15

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

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

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

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

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

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

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

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

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

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Is My Shepherd
PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 16

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
 He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul,
 He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.
 Even though I walk through the valley of death,
 I will fear no evil.
Why? For You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me,
 In the presence of my enemies,
 You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
 Surely goodness and mercy will follow me,
 All of the days of my life,
 And I will dwell in the house of the LORD,
 Forever and ever and ever.
 Psalm Twenty-three.

Words adapted from Psalm 23:1-6, ESV Constance Dever © 2012

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

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4: **God Loves His People by Caring for Their Needs**

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

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

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

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Pslam 23:1-6, ESV

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

CASE STORY

2 Peter

Our story is: The Case of the Two Needy Men.

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

1. Who were the two needy men? Who did they rely upon to get what they needed?
2. Which one only truly had all his needs met? Why?

This story takes place in New Testament times, in Rome, when Nero was Caesar. This was about thirty years after Jesus died on the cross, rose from the dead and went back to heaven.

Apparently Caesar Nero wasn't that much to look at. He had a head of blond curls, but weak, blue eyes and a lot of acne. He had a big belly and bad body odor, too! No, Caesar Nero certainly wasn't much to look at—or even smell—but when he entered the room, people bowed. And when he wanted something, he got it. Caesar Nero was a man who took care of his own needs—no matter what.

Nero had his mother Agrippina to thank for much of the good things he enjoyed. She was the one who had Caesar Claudius adopt Nero and choose him to be the next Caesar over his own son, Britannicus. Agrippina also had the great teacher Seneca brought from exile to teach Nero philosophy, science, Latin and how to run a government. And it was she who had her husband Caesar Claudius killed with poisoned mushrooms so Nero would be crowned emperor over the Roman Empire at just age sixteen.

As Caesar, Nero became proud. He didn't need his mother or Seneca anymore. He was the most powerful man in the world. He could get whatever he wanted—and he wanted a lot! He wanted a magnificent, new palace, surrounded by woods, parks, zoos, waterfalls and fountains. He wanted a lake big enough to sail ships on it; and a market, an outdoor theatre, a big workout center (called a gymnasium) and a luxurious bathhouse with steamy salt and spring water for Nero and his guests to enjoy.

He would name the palace Domus Aurea: the Golden Palace. It would have walls decorated in gold, silver, jewels and fine paintings. One dining room would have sprinklers in the ceiling that sprayed perfume down upon the guests. Another would have a ceiling painted with the

sun, moon, stars, and planets that would rotate in keeping with the time of day or night.

Most incredible of all would be the 120-foot-high (about as tall as a ten-story building) bronze statue of himself that he would place at the palace's entrance. After all, shouldn't he be honored as Nero the Great: king over the Roman Empire? Provider for its millions' of people?

But there was a problem with Nero's palace plans. There was no place in Rome to put it! It would take up hundreds of acres, and the city was already dangerously crowded. Hundreds of thousands of people squeezed into shabby houses built along dark, narrow passageways that were more like tunnels than streets.

But remember. Nero was a man used to meeting his own needs. He would find a way to get what he wanted. What if something was to happen to get rid of all those dark streets swarming with life...too much life, some might say? Think what beautiful, wide streets and new buildings could be built there instead! It certainly would be much healthier for the people and whose to say there wouldn't be space left over for Nero's dream palace?

Just a thought of Nero's...or perhaps a plan? No one knows for sure. But somehow, on July 19th 64 A.D., a fire broke out in some shops at one end of the Circus Maximus—the huge sports arena—in Rome. The fire lasted nine days, destroying two-thirds of the city. About half a million people lost everything.

What a caring emperor Nero seemed in those days after the fire. He put shelters in his own gardens to house them and he brought in low-cost corn so all could afford to eat. He offered sacrifices to the Roman gods asking them to help the people hurt by the fire.

But even as Nero did these good things, the people began to say that Nero had set the fire on purpose. And when he began to build Domus Aurea where the fire had been, the people were sure they were right. Many hated him. Some wanted to kill him.

But don't forget: Nero was the man who took care of his own needs. He knew what to do about these rumors. He would blame the fire on someone else. Someone most Romans hated already: the Christians.

"Those Christians! They're the ones who started that fire!" Nero lied. "They refuse to worship the emperor and the Roman gods. They say their God will judge Rome for its sinful ways. They hate Romans. That's why they started this

fire!" he told the people.

The people believed Nero's lies. They didn't like the Christians and their strange beliefs. They rejoiced as Nero sent bands of soldiers to gather up the Christians and send them to their death. Some were dipped in wax; some were thrown to the lions; some were burned alive; still others were crucified. Nero, the man who could meet all his needs, had done it again. He sat in his palace in satisfaction. He had turned people's angry from him to the Christians.

The apostle Peter was in Rome when Nero's great persecution of the Christians began. He had come there to encourage the Roman believers in their faith when the great fire broke out. He had not been arrested during those first, terrible days when so many Christians lost their lives; but, he was not to be spared forever. Nero sent out soldiers to arrest more Christians and captured Peter. At last! One of the Christians' greatest leaders would soon be dead! The Romans must have thought.

Great leader! Ha! Peter couldn't be more unlike Nero, the great Roman leader. Peter was poor. He had no armies. He was helpless to take care of his own needs, let alone others. And what about this Jesus who Peter worshiped? He was supposed to be the Son of God who paid for God's people's sins while He died on the cross, then rose from the grave, in victory over death. But if Jesus really was the Son of God, where was He now when Peter and the rest of the Christians were in such great need? Dead and gone... the Romans believed.

But Peter knew the truth. So did the other believers. It looked like Jesus had left them all alone; but He had not. He DID reign in heaven. He DID have power to take care of God's people's needs. He was taking care of them right then. His Holy Spirit was working in their hearts, giving them courage and reminding them of Jesus' promises to them. Promises like: "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lived and believes in Me will never die." And, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

No. Peter didn't fear. Perhaps he had no way to take care of his needs, but he knew God did. God would be with him, helping him to the very end.

But Peter didn't just think of himself in these last days of his life. He thought of the other Christians spread throughout Asia Minor. They struggled, too. They had teachers who taught them lies about God. They had

enemies who made fun of them and even hurt them for believing in Jesus. Peter wanted to encourage them to keep to keep on believing in God and trusting that He would take care of all their needs, too.

So Peter turned to his friend Silvanus who was with him. "Silvanus, write down one last letter for me."

Getting out a scroll, Silvanus wrote as Peter spoke: "From Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To you who through our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received faith in God. May God fill you with His peace and grace through Jesus!" Peter urged them. "Don't be afraid or discouraged. Keep living for Jesus. Remember that His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness. He has given us His very great and precious promises. Keep growing in goodness, and in knowing God and His Word. If you do, you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus has made it clear that soon I will die and go to be with Him. I'm sending you this letter so you will always remember these things when I am gone," Peter said.

Peter spoke these words and many others. When he finished, he said to Silvanus, "Give this to the Christians in Asia Minor." Silvanus promised he would.

Peter died soon after. Soldiers tied up his hands and took him to a cross to die. Some say Peter asked to be crucified upside, feeling unworthy to die the same way as His Savior Jesus had. No one knows for sure. But we do know that God was with Peter, either upside down or right side up, as he died on that cross. And, we know that by His divine power, the God who gave Peter everything he needed for life and for godliness, gave him everything he needed to die for Him, too. And best of all, we know that when Peter's suffering was over, his spirit went to be with Jesus in heaven. There at last, he knew the fullest delight any person can ever know: life in God's presence: rich and full and indescribably wonderful forever. Yes. God had taken care of all his needs--this man who seemed to have nothing.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Loves His People By Caring For Their Needs

Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 23:1-6

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with

your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Do you wonder what happened to Nero, the man who thought he could take care of his own needs? In the years after Peter died, Nero's plans fell apart. Nero thought persecuting and killing Christians would put an end to belief in Jesus; but instead, it led to many Romans hearing the good news of Jesus and believing. They saw God's divine power at work in them, giving them courage to keep confessing Jesus as their Savior even as they suffered terribly and died. "Surely someone could die like this only if what they say about Jesus is true," they thought.

But this was the least of Nero's problems. The Roman people completely turned against him. They made plans to kill him. In the end, Nero killed himself before someone else did. Domus Aurea was abandoned. The beautiful grounds were divided up and his magnificent palace was allowed to crumble. His head was removed from the 120 feet bronze statue.

Worst of all, when Nero died, he died in his sins, having never repented and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. The man who though he could take care of his own needs, didn't take care of any of his real needs at all. How very sad!

What about you and me? Who are we like? Are we like Nero? Have we tried to take care of our self and have nothing to do with God? Or, like Peter, have we trusted Jesus to save us from our sins and to take care of all our needs? If we are like Nero, the wonderful news is it is not too late! Even today we can turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. He promises to forgive us and make us God's very own, dearly loved people. And if we do, we can know that no matter what we go through God has given us His divine power to give us everything we need for life and godliness.

Let's praise God for His wonderful promises to always take care of all His people's needs. Let's ask Him to fill us with His divine power that we might have everything we need for life and godliness to the praise of His glory!

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God gets annoyed when His people keep asking for Him to take care of their needs.

Answer: False! God always delights to hear His people's prayers and to answer them. He loves to take care of His people!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who were the two needy men? Who did they rely upon to get what they needed?

Answer: Nero and Peter. Nero relied upon himself. Peter relied upon Jesus.

b. Who looked like he had all his needs met? Who truly had all his needs met? Why?

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

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

Psalm 23:1-6

"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green _____. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his _____ sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they _____ me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD _____."

Answers: pastures; name's; comfort; forever.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 14,15

Verse 1

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

Verse 4

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

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

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

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Provider for Your people's every need, even when facing death.

C God, we confess that many times, like Nero, we are selfish and greedy. We think about what we want and forget You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for promising to always give Your people the power they need to endure even the hardest things, such as persecution and death.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Change our hearts so that we are not greedy and selfish like Nero, but are people who love You and live for You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Is My Shepherd

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 16

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul,
He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of death,
I will fear no evil.

Why? For You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me,
In the presence of my enemies,
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me,
All of the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD,
Forever and ever and ever.
Psalm Twenty-three.

Words adapted from Psalm 23:1-6, ESV Constance Dever © 2012

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

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 5:

God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

God promises His children to use everything that happens to them in their life on earth for their good and His glory. Ahead of time, God prepared special good works for each of them to do. He has also planned to carefully allow hard times and suffering in their lives for His special, good purposes.

What are these special, good purposes? To bring glory to His name, showing the world what He is like. And, to change them so that they become more like Jesus, who loves His Father completely and delights in Him and His perfectly good will. These are the two things God's people want most of all!

No one likes to suffer--not even for the best of purposes! But, God's people are so happy to know that there is nothing in their lives--from the easiest, most enjoyable thing to the very saddest, hardest thing--that their loving Father has not chosen very carefully to use for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30, ESV

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

CASE STORY

Matthew 9; Mark 4-5; Luke 8

Our story is called:

The Case of the Man and the Diving Pigs.

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

1. What was wrong with man? How did this cause the pigs to dive?
2. How did Jesus use this man's struggles for God's glory and for the good of this man and many more?

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

It was getting late. "First Evening" had passed—the time of day when the sun first began to sink down into the west. "Second Evening" was upon them. The shadows were deepening and the moon was on the rise, when Jesus and His disciples beached their boat near Gadara, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Too far from their home on the other side of lake, they would be spending night here and the disciples were probably not very happy about that. Why? Because this side of the Sea of Galilee was "the Decapolis" or "the Ten Cities," named after the ten cities the Romans had taken from Israel and put under the control of Syria, the country that lay to the east of Israel. This was Gentile country--home to non- Jews who lived life in their very non-Jewish-y way.

But this wasn't the worst of it. You see, Jesus had them put to shore near hills covered with thousands of pigs and filled with caves of dead bodies! For a Jew, it doesn't get much worse than that! Pigs and dead bodies were two things that made Jews unclean. That is, they made them unfit to be around other Jews and to worship the Lord in the Temple.

Gentiles, pigs and dead people! These were all very good reasons for a Jew to get back in the boat and row to some other place for the night, but they weren't good enough reasons for Jesus. He had plans to meet someone who lived right there among the pigs and the dead and change his life--for his good and God's glory.

Who was this someone? The only name we have for him is "The Demoniac:" This poor, miserable man from Gadara, had come under the grip of Satan's power. The demons made the man stronger than a regular human. They urged him to hurt himself and hurt others. Many times he would yell out in terrible shrieks. People tried strong chains and

kept him under guard. But nothing worked. He broke the chains, escaped his guards and snuck away to lonely places, like this cemetery.

Many people from the Decapolis hired magic workers to chant magic spells over demon possessed people. If this man's family had done this, it hadn't worked. So they left him to live out among the tombs and to suffer by himself. While living out there, he got He had become so violent that no one could pass safely through the cemetery anymore.

It was right there, on the shores below the cemetery, where Jesus had his disciples put to shore. Full of God's power and love, He had come to change this man's terrible life for his own good and for God's glory, as all were soon to see.

Neither Jesus nor this man had ever met each other before, yet they both knew who the other was. Jesus knew by the Spirit of God; but the man, by the demons. Even from a distance, they knew it was the mighty Son of God who was on that shore—and they were terrified. The man immediately ran out of the tombs and fell down at Jesus' feet.

"Come out of this man, evil spirits!" Jesus ordered.

"What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" they shrieked back through the man.

Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied. What a name! A legion was the largest single unit in the Roman army—up to 6000 soldiers! What a lot of demons troubled this poor man!

"Please, Jesus, don't send us out of this area! Don't send us to the Abyss," the demons pleaded with Jesus. They did not want to return to that holding place for Satan and his demons. "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them," the demons begged Him.

Jesus gave them permission. There would be a day of final judgment when they--would be bound in the Abyss forever, but it had not come yet. Right now Jesus would use these demons to bring glory to God. He would show God's complete power over evil, rescue this poor man and encourage many to believe He was God's Son.

At Jesus' command, the demons left the man and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the Sea of Galilee and were drowned.

Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. [Sure enough. Everything was just as they said: There were the bodies of the 2000 pigs, scattered along the shore, and bobbing up and down in the surf of the Sea. There was the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind. And there was Jesus, the mighty One who had done with just His words what no chain or magic spell or anything else could do.

"Tell us again what happened," the crowd of people who gathered asked.

Once more the pig herders told what they had seen. The crowd saw what Jesus had done and they should have worshiped Him. Here was a man no one could help! Here was a man dangerous to himself and to others! Here was a man whose life was ruined under the mighty grip of Satan! Yet here came Jesus, the Son of God. Full of God's power to save; full of His love! He changed this man's terrible life for his own good and for the God's glory, as all could see.

The people could see the great thing that Jesus had done, but they didn't want to believe. They were scared of Jesus and His great power. They could not believe He used it for their good and God's glory. "Please, Jesus, leave us. Go away from our lands," they pleaded with Him.

How relieved the people of Gadara were as Jesus and the others turned back to the shore to sail home! Only one of them followed Jesus down to the boat: the man who had been freed of the demons.

"Jesus, please, take me with You. I want to be Your disciple, too," he begged.

But Jesus said no. He had other plans for this man. Good plans; plans that would bring great glory to God. "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how He has had mercy on you," Jesus told him.

The man obeyed. As Jesus and the others set off across the Sea of Galilee for their home in Capernaum, the man set off across the hills to his home.

What a homecoming it must have been as neighbors, family and friends recognized him. "What happened to you? Who healed you?" they exclaimed.

"Jesus did this!" he replied. Then he told them the wonderful story: "I was a man no one could help. I was a man dangerous to myself and to others. I was a man whose life was ruined under the mighty grip of Satan. Yet here

came Jesus, the Son of God. Full of God's power to save; full of His love. He changed my terrible life for my own good and for God's glory," he told them.

That man's family, neighbors and friends may have been the first to hear, but they certainly were not the last. The Bible tells us that the man traveled all over the Decapolis telling how much Jesus had done for him. And all men marveled at God's goodness shown to this man and the glory and power of Jesus' name.

Our Bible Truth is: God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

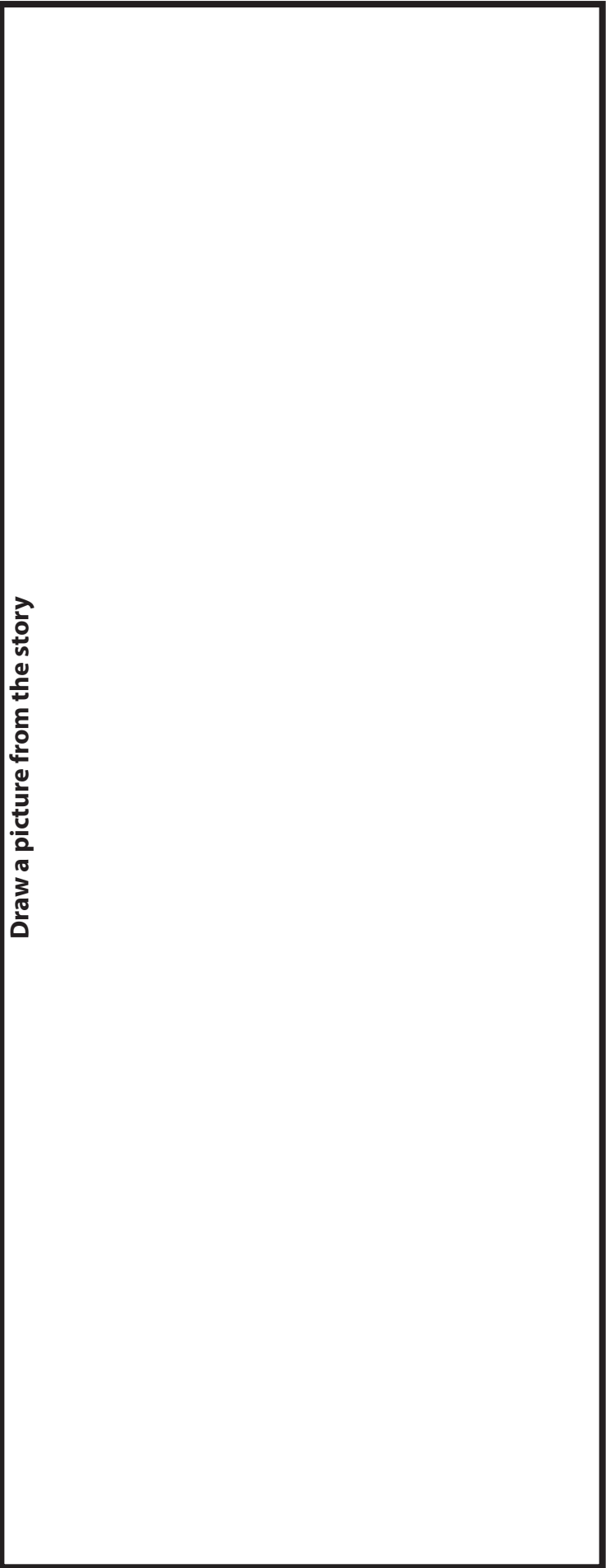
Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:28-30

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

How great is our God! He truly uses all things for the good. Look how He even used the terrible work of demons for this man's good and God's glory!

But what about you and me? If Jesus could work this kind of good in this man's life and brought such great glory to God through it, could He work powerfully in our lives, too? Yes, He can! He can work in our hearts, helping us to turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our own Savior, just as He worked in this man's life. Then we will be His people! But that is just the beginning! When we are His people, there is nothing in our lives that He will not use for our good and for His glory!

Let's praise God for being able to use absolutely everything in His people's lives for their good and His glory. Let's ask Him to make us His people. Let's ask Him to bring great glory to His name through everything in our lives.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

Answer: True!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. What was wrong with man? How did this cause the pigs to dive?

Answer: The man was troubled by many demons. When Jesus healed the man, he let the demons go into the pigs and that made them dive over the edge of the cliff.

b. How did Jesus use this man's struggles for God's glory and for the good of this man and many more?

Answer: Jesus showed that He was God's Son, powerful enough to make all the powers of evil obey. Nothing or no one is too strong for Him! This poor man's struggle was over. He came to believe in Jesus and be saved. Many others heard what Jesus did for him and they also put their faith in Jesus.

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

Romans 8:28-30

"And we ___ that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his ____. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the ___ of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he ___ he also glorified."

Answers: know; purpose; image; justified.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being more powerful than anyone or anything else--even Satan.

C God, we confess that many times we are fearful of evil, forgetting that Jesus has broken the power of sin and death. Oh, how we need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for using even the very worse and very hardest things in Your people's lives for their good and Your glory.

S God, break the power of sin and death in our lives. Work in our hearts, helping us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 19,20

Verse 3

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Verse 4

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Words: John Rippon's Selection of Hymns

Music: Joseph Funk's Genuine Church Music

God's people know all God has an unbreakable plan to use all things in their lives for their good. He has planned that even their "fiery trials"—the hardest things that happen to them—that God will use them all to make them like Jesus. They do not have to like the fiery trials, but they can praise God for how He will use them for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

And We Know

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 21

And we know that for those who love God
all things work together for good,
And we know that for those who love God
All things work together for good,
For those who are called, according to his purpose,
For those who are called, according to his purpose,

Refrain:

All things work together for good,
All things work together for good,
All things, all things, all things, Work together for good.

For those he foreknew, he also predestined,
For those he foreknew, he also predestined,
To be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the firstborn among many.
To be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the firstborn among many. Refrain
Romans Eight, twenty-eight and nine.

Words: Romans 8:28,29 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

God's people are those who love Him. In His great love, He has called them to turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. This is what it means to be justified. But being justified in just the beginning of God's good, forever plans for His people. He also planned for all things in their lives—both enjoyable things and hard things—for the good purpose of making them more like Jesus. Yes, He would use all of them to prepare them for life with Him in heaven, where they would be glorified: forever freed from sin and a pure reflection of God's glory. This is God's wonderful plan for making everything in His people's lives for their good and His glory.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 5:

God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

God promises His children to use everything that happens to them in their life on earth for their good and His glory. Ahead of time, God prepared special good works for each of them to do. He has also planned to carefully allow hard times and suffering in their lives for His special, good purposes.

What are these special, good purposes? To bring glory to His name, showing the world what He is like. And, to change them so that they become more like Jesus, who loves His Father completely and delights in Him and His perfectly good will. These are the two things God's people want most of all!

No one likes to suffer--not even for the best of purposes! But, God's people are so happy to know that there is nothing in their lives--from the easiest, most enjoyable thing to the very saddest, hardest thing--that their loving Father has not chosen very carefully to use for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30, ESV

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Blind Cliff-Walker.

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

1. Who was the Blind Cliff-Walker? How did he become blind? What cliffs did he walk on?
2. How did God use the boy's blindness for his good? How did God use the boy's cliff-walking for His own glory?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out in 1980 in Nepal.

Down the steep trail trekked a young man and his wife, carrying all of their simple belongings. All around them towered the great, snowy mountains of Nepal. Mountains like Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world. But as amazing as view was, the young couple kept their eyes on the narrow path. looking down. One wrong step and they could easily fall hundreds of feet to their death.

How sad this couple were! They loved Nepal, but they had to leave. They couldn't find jobs to make enough money for their family. So they packed their belongings, left their home and headed to Darjeeling, India to work in the tea gardens there.

After many miles, the couple came to the rolling hills of Darjeeling! The man got a job in the tea gardens that paid well. At last they could settle down!

Not long after arriving in Darjeeling, the couple's first child was born-- a little boy they named Titus. How happy there were! The man and his wife brought offerings of fruit and incense and bowed low before their Hindu gods: "We dedicate our son to you," they prayed. "Bless him, protect him and make him strong that he may bring honor and glory to your great names."

For many years it seemed like the Hindu gods honored the prayers of Titus' parents. Titus grew up happy and strong. But when Titus turned twelve, everything changed. His eyes started hurting him a lot. Titus' parents called for the only help they knew of: the village witch doctor. The witch doctor chanted prayers and put his magical mixtures on Titus' eyes, but nothing helped. Titus' eyesight kept getting worse until at last he was completely blind!

Things quickly went from bad to worse for Titus. Not long after he had lost his eyesight, both of his parents died. What would happen to him now? Who would care for this lone, blind boy?

Some of the villagers felt sorry for Titus. They decided to send him to a school for the blind run by a Christian mission in another village in Darjeeling. They would give Titus food, clothing and a place to live. They could also teach him how to read and write with special raised dots, called Braille. And even teach him a skill to make money, such as how to make furniture out of cane.

At the school, Titus felt more alone than ever. His parents were gone. The villagers he had grown up with were miles away. And because this was a Christian mission school, Titus did not even have the Hindu gods and goddesses he had worshiped.

Titus was confused. Why had all these bad things happened to him? What about the prayers his parents had long ago offered up to the Hindu gods for him: Had the gods forgotten him? Had they rejected him? Was this how they honored and glorified their names through him? Titus could not understand why the gods would treat him this way.

But the problem with Titus' Hindu gods wasn't that they had forgotten Titus or rejected him. The problem was that those Hindu gods were only fake ones--made of wood, stone and gold. They couldn't bless or protect Titus. They couldn't make him strong, no matter how many prayers and offerings his parents had made.

But there was a true God. His name is the LORD. He loved His people and made all things in their lives work for their good and His glory. He knew and loved Titus, as Titus was soon to find out.

Titus began to go to classes at his school. His teachers taught him how to read and write Braille, and how to make furniture out of cane to make a living for himself. But since they were Christians, they also taught Titus about the Lord, the one true God, and His Son Jesus, who He sent to save all who would ever turn from their sins and trust Him as their Savior.

As Titus learned about Jesus, the Holy Spirit worked in his heart. He turned away from his sins and trusted Jesus as His Savior. Peace and joy flooded into Titus' heart as Jesus took away his fears and guilt. Titus' life was changed. Long ago his parents had dedicated his life to glorifying the Hindu gods. Now he was dedicating his life to glorifying the Lord.

"But what could Titus do to glorify the Lord?" perhaps you are thinking. "He's little, alone and helpless. What good

could God work through his sad, little life? How could Titus bring God glory?

A huge amount of good to Titus and others, and a huge amount of glory to Himself, that's what! For the greater the weakness or difficulty God's people face, the greater room there is for God to be glorified as He turns something bad or something hard into something good and God-glorifying. And that's just what God did through Titus.

Titus spent long hours moving his hand over the raised bumps of words in his Braille Bible, learning all he could. Before long, Titus became a Bible teacher at the school.

As a teacher, Titus taught the new students about Jesus. He urged them to turn away from worshiping idols and trust in Jesus as their Savior. He told them of God's wonderful plans to use everything thing in His people's lives for their good and His glory. He told them how God had used his blindness and the deaths of his parents to God to save him. Many students turned from their sins and trusted in Jesus, too.

This was just the beginning. God stirred Titus' heart to spread the good news of Jesus to others. First, blind Titus made his way down the road to tell the people in the nearby villages about Jesus. Then, he made his way down the road to faraway villages in Darjeeling. And then, most amazing of all, all the way to Nepal!

Along narrow, treacherous mountain paths. Down through hilly jungles known for robbers and fierce, wild animals. Across raging rivers. Blind Titus traveled them all, depending upon God to keep him safe. And God did, sometimes in most amazing ways.

Once Titus accidentally took a road under construction. The workers had just laid dynamite on the part he was walking on. Of course, blind Titus couldn't see the workers or the dynamite; and the workers didn't see him until it was too late.

"Kaboom" went the dynamite! "Crash!" went huge rocks flew up in the air and shook the earth as they hit the ground, all around Titus. The blind man could do nothing but stand where he was and trust God. Was he killed? No! Was he even injured? No! Did even a single stone hit him? No! The Lord protected him completely.

When the construction workers saw what happened they asked the same question everyone else asked: "How could this blind man fearlessly pass along these paths that many people with good eyesight dared not travel? How

could he stand in the middle of a dynamite blast and not be harmed?"

Titus delighted to tell them. "My parents dedicated me to Hindu gods when I was a child, but it is the Lord who is the one, true God. He sent His Son to save all would ever turn from their sins and trust Him as their Savior. He saved me."

"Now I am one of His people. He loves me and uses everything in my life for my good and His glory, even my blindness. He is the one who protects me and gives me strength to travel all these dangerous places. He has brought me here to tell you about Him that you might see His glory and power through my weakness and trust Jesus as your Savior, too," he told them.

God worked in the hearts of many who saw what He had done in Titus. Many in Darjeeling and Nepal have turned from their sins and trusted in Jesus, believing that the God who loved Titus and worked such wonders in his life, surely must be the one, true God. He alone should be worshiped. He alone would they trust with their lives.

Titus rejoiced to see God use his life—and most of all his blindness-- to show others about His glory and power. How wonderful that God could do such great things through his weakness!

And it seems that God is still working through Titus. For at last report, Brother Titus is still alive, traveling and teaching everywhere the Lord leads him, bringing glory to the One who has used everything in his life for his good.

Our Bible Truth is: God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:28-30:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

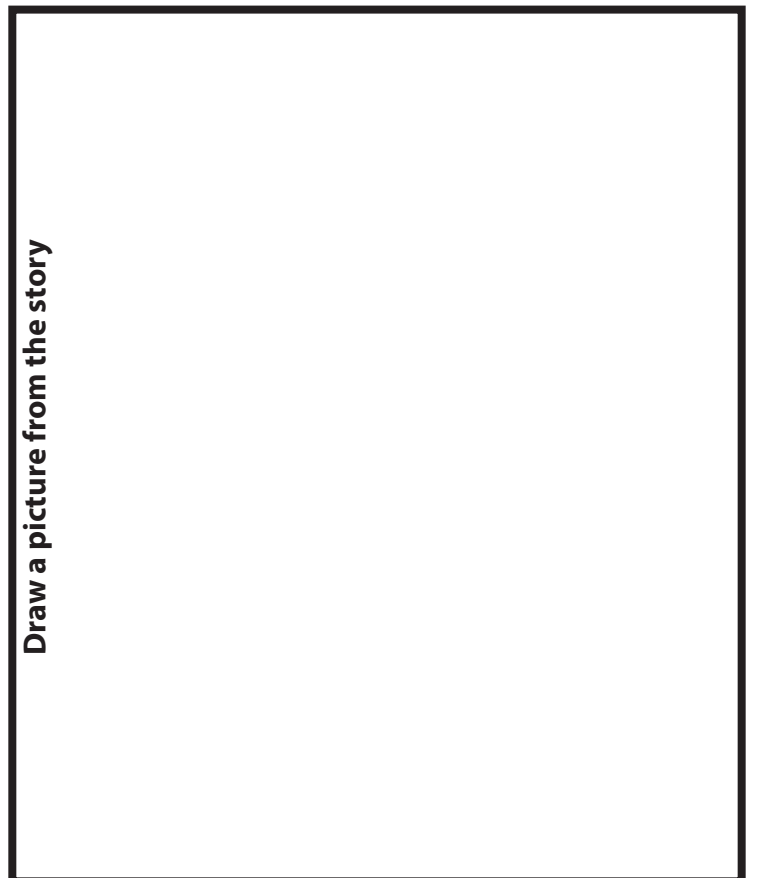
Losing both of his parents, becoming blind, being taken away from everyone he knew, were such very, very hard things for young Titus to bear! But Titus saw God use them all for his own good and God's own glory?

Traveling alone and blind through tall mountains with wild, hungry animals, steep, dangerous cliffs and robbers

would cause most people to worry. But not Titus. He knew God was all-powerful and that He loved him. He trusted that God's plan for his life would be for his good and God's glory, no matter what it was. And even today, God is using Titus' life tell more people about Him and to bring more glory to His name.

What about you and me? What kind of hard things have we had to go through or may yet happen to us? Could the Lord use those things for our good and His glory? Could He use them to make us more like Jesus? Could He use our lives to tell others about Him and bring glory to His name? Yes, without a doubt, He can and He will--when we are His people, those who have turned from their sins and trust Jesus as their Savior. For the Lord loves His people so much; and it is His promise that He will use absolutely everything that happens to them for His good and His glory.

Let's praise God for loving His people so much and being so powerful as to make everything in their lives work for their good and His glory. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, helping us to turn from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to use even all the difficult things in our lives to work for our good and His glory; and, to help us not to just be sad or worried about troubles we may have, but excited that He will use them all in a glorious way.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Ahead of time--even before He created the world, God prepared special good works for each of His people to do.
Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Blind Cliff-Walker? How did he become blind? What cliffs did he walk on?

Answer: A boy named Titus. From an illness when he was twelve years old.

b. How did God use the boy's blindness for his good? How did God use the man's cliff-walking for His own glory?

Answer: Titus was sent to a special school to learn Braille and there he learned about Jesus and became a Christian. Titus' brave trust in God to guide him even along the steep, cliff-roads of Nepal showed many just how great God is to take care of His people.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30

"And we know that for those who ___ God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he ___ he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his ___, in order that he might be the firstborn among many ___. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

Answers: love; foreknew; Son; brothers.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Perfect User of all the things in Your people's lives, for their good and Your glory.

C God, we confess that many times we complain about hard things that happen to us rather than ask You to use them for our good and Your glory. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for promising to use everything in the lives of Your people for Your good purposes.

S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Use all the things in our lives for our good and Your glory.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 19,20

Verse 3

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Verse 4

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Words: John Rippon's Selection of Hymns

Music: Joseph Funk's Genuine Church Music

God's people know all God has an unbreakable plan to use all things in their lives for their good. He has planned that even their "fiery trials"—the hardest things that happen to them—that God will use them all to make them like Jesus. They do not have to like the fiery trials, but they can praise God for how He will use them for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

And We Know

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 21

And we know that for those who love God
all things work together for good,
And we know that for those who love God
All things work together for good,
For those who are called, according to his purpose,
For those who are called, according to his purpose,

Refrain:

All things work together for good,
All things work together for good,
All things, all things, all things, Work together for good.

For those he foreknew, he also predestined,
For those he foreknew, he also predestined,
To be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the firstborn among many.
To be conformed to the image of his Son,
That he might be the firstborn among many. Refrain
Romans Eight, twenty-eight and nine.

Words: Romans 8:28,29 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

God's people are those who love Him. In His great love, He has called them to turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. This is what it means to be justified. But being justified in just the beginning of God's good, forever plans for His people. He also planned for all things in their lives—both enjoyable things and hard things—for the good purpose of making them more like Jesus. Yes, He would use all of them to prepare them for life with Him in heaven, where they would be glorified: forever freed from sin and a pure reflection of God's glory. This is God's wonderful plan for making everything in His people's lives for their good and His glory.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 5:

God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

God promises His children to use everything that happens to them in their life on earth for their good and His glory. Ahead of time, God prepared special good works for each of them to do. He has also planned to carefully allow hard times and suffering in their lives for His special, good purposes.

What are these special, good purposes? To bring glory to His name, showing the world what He is like. And, to change them so that they become more like Jesus, who loves His Father completely and delights in Him and His perfectly good will. These are the two things God's people want most of all!

No one likes to suffer--not even for the best of purposes! But, God's people are so happy to know that there is nothing in their lives--from the easiest, most enjoyable thing to the very saddest, hardest thing--that their loving Father has not chosen very carefully to use for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30, ESV

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

CASE STORY

Genesis 37, 49-50; Exodus 1, 6-11, 13; Joshua 24

Our story is: The Case of the Ancient Mummy.

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

1. Who was the ancient mummy? What hard thing did he endure in his life and how did God use it for his good?
2. What did God promise him? How did God answer this promise for His own glory?

This story takes place in Old Testament times, in Canaan, about 1750 years before Jesus lived on earth.

What a sight! The Canaanites could hardly believe their eyes! Dozens of sleek, Arabian horses harnessed to fine, Egyptian chariots right there on the east side of the Jordan River, hundreds of miles from Egypt!

Even stranger than the chariots and horses, was who came with them...and what they were doing. It was none other than all of Pharaoh's most important men, dressed in their beautiful headdresses, pleated linen skirts, gold belts and sandals. For seven days straight, they had been weeping and wailing at the top of their lungs around a beautiful sarcophagus on the grain threshing floor of Atad!

The Canaanites were so amazed at what they saw that they renamed the place Abel Mizraim, which means Mourning of the Egyptians. "Who is in that sarcophagus that this huge crowd of Egyptians would mourn for like this?" the Canaanites asked. "Why didn't they just bury him at home in Egypt instead of carrying him hundreds of miles across wilderness and sands to this threshing floor?" they wondered.

Inside the sarcophagus was the mummy of Jacob—or Israel, as the LORD renamed him. He and his sons had lived in Mamre in Canaan, but had moved to Egypt when the great famine struck. He had been living there these past seventeen years and then died. Jacob's sons had promised to bring him home and bury him here, near Mamre in the cave at Machpelah where his grandfather Abraham, father Isaac, wife Rachel and others had been buried before him.

But why would Egyptians be weeping and wailing for Jacob? There was only one reason: Jacob's son, Joseph, Pharaoh's great prime minister. In honor of Joseph, Pharaoh ordered all Egypt to mourn Jacob's death. For seventy days the people wept and wailed for him; and now,

the royalty of Egypt escorted the family here to Atad to mourn at the threshing floor or another seven days.

By themselves, Jacob's family then crossed the Jordan River into Canaan and placed Jacob's body in the cave at Machpelah. This was the first time in over seventeen years that any of Jacob's family had been back home. What did they see? Was the land beginning to get green again or was it still dead and brown from the famine? Whatever they saw that day, they knew could not move home yet, no matter how much they might have wanted to. It wasn't time. They had no choice but to go back to Goshen, the land in Egypt the Pharaoh gave them to live.

It wasn't that Goshen was a pleasant place to live. It was. It had rich grassland for growing crops and grazing flocks. Their families were thriving there. But nonetheless, Joseph's brothers were dreading going back. Why? They were afraid of Joseph.

You see, it had been them, Joseph's own, jealous brothers, who had sold Joseph to some traveling merchants long ago. The merchants sold him as a slave in Egypt. Joseph spent many years in slavery and in prison before the Lord rescued him to serve as the prime minister of Egypt. Joseph had good reason to hate his brothers for all they had done. And now that their father was dead, they were afraid Joseph would punish them for what they did to him.

They lied to Joseph to protect themselves: "Before Jacob died, he said you must forgive us for treating you so badly, Joseph. Please forgive us!" they said.

No lie was needed. "Don't be afraid," Joseph reassured them. "Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. I will provide for you and your families." he told them.

Joseph was right to think God meant it for good to save many, but there was far more to it than just that. God doesn't do everything just for His people's good, but for His glory, too. And God had big plans to do good to lots of His people and to bring lots of glory to Himself through the Israelites' time in Egypt. He promised to make these little families into a great nation. He would deliver them out of Egypt in a great display of His power, then He would take them back to Canaan and bless them richly. The whole world would see how He used all things for His people's good and His glory.

But like so many of God's plans, these promises would

come about slowly, according to His perfect timing.

Many years went by. Joseph and his brothers became old men. They longed to go home to Canaan, but there still was no sign of God's great plan to take them back home. Yet even as Joseph lay dying, he still had faith. He gathered his brothers and said, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you home to Canaan, the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When He does, carry my bones up from this place."

Joseph's brothers promised they would. So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. They embalmed him, placed him in a coffin, and waited.

Three hundred and fifty years passed. Hard times come. The families of Joseph and his brothers had grown into a great nation of people, over a million strong, but the new Pharaoh made them his slaves. He treated them terribly, forcing them to build his new cities and and work in his fields.

The people cried out to God: "Help us! Help us! Rescue us from this place!" God heard their cries and answered them. At last it was time for God's great plan for their good and His glory to be completed.

The LORD sent Moses and Aaron to work a mighty rescue by His great power. Plague after plague, the LORD sent down upon Pharaoh and his people. "Let was the message Moses gave Pharaoh from the LORD. At first Pharaoh was stubborn and prideful. He refused to honor any god but the Egyptian gods. He refused to let the Israelites go. But when at last, all of the firstborn sons of Egypt died, Pharaoh gave in and released the Israelites to worship the LORD. At last after 350 years, it was time they were headed back home to the Promised Land!

Early on the morning after the firstborn of Egypt died, strong hands took hold of Joseph's sarcophagus that had stood untouched for hundreds of years. Like Jacob his father, the bones of Joseph were escorted out of Egypt, but this time it was by over a million Israelites. Like Jacob his father, the people made a great noise as they carried Joseph's bones out of Egypt--but this time it wasn't mourning for the dead man in the sarcophagus, it was rejoicing over the great God who had rescued them. For this time, they were leaving Egypt and never coming back! God had fulfilled His good plan for them at last. He was making them His own, treasured people. He was taking them home to the Promised Land.

As they left Egypt, the word spread far and wide about the mighty works of the God who had rescued them from the most powerful nation on earth. When the people heard what He had done, they feared the Israelites and glorified the LORD as the great God that He is.

Just as Joseph had said, "God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," and so He had... and done it all to His glory.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:28-30

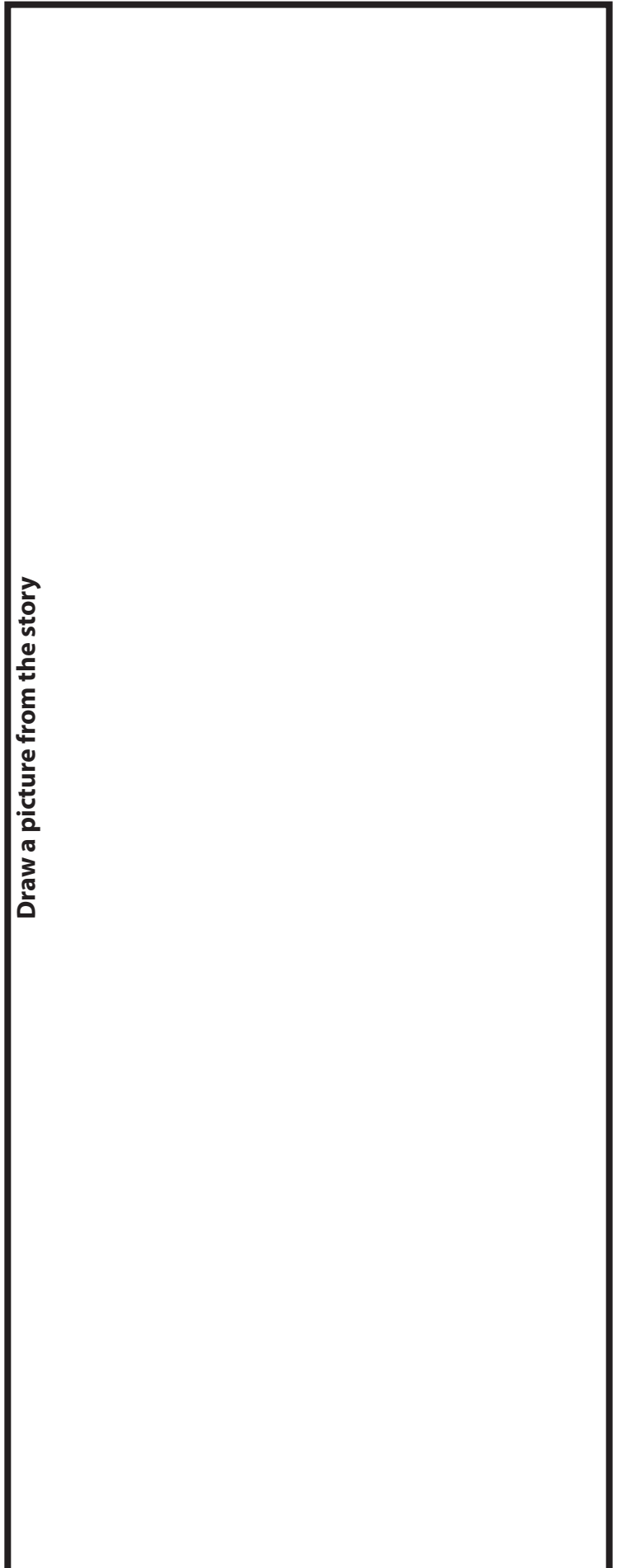
And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."

God has never failed to work for the good of those who love Him. He never fails to use even the hardest things in their lives to help them love Him and obey Him. And God never fails to use all those things to glorify Himself. Joseph knew learned this.

But what about you and me? Could God work in our lives this way? Could He really bring glory to Himself through us? Yes, He could! Yes, He can! It is His promise when we become His people! How do we become His people? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our own Savior.

Let's praise God for using all things in His people's lives for their good and His glory. Let's ask Him to make us His people. Let's ask Him to help us to trust Him to work good in the difficult things we go through. And let's ask Him to bring glory to Himself as others see His love for His people in how He works good in everything in their lives.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God's people are so happy to know that most everything they go through, God will use for their good and His glory.
 Answer: False! God's people are so happy to know that EVERYTHING they go through God will use for their good and His glory!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Ancient Mummy? What hard thing did he endure in his life and how did God use it for his good?

Answer: Joseph. He was sold into slavery in Egypt and lived as a slave and as a prisoner in jail for many years. God used it to save his entire family from death by starvation.

b. What did God promise him? How did God answer this promise for His own glory?

Answer: God promised Joseph that he would bless his family in Egypt and many years later take them back to the Promised Land to live. The people would carry his bones home with them.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30

"And we know that for those who love God ___ things work together for ___, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also ___ to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also ___, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Answers: all; good; predestined; called.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Worker of Your people's good and Your glory, even in the hardest things that happen to them.

C God, we confess that we are tempted to lie instead of trusting You, God, when we are afraid of punishment, like Joseph's brothers did. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being true to Your promises and always working out Your good purposes.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Use all the things that happen to us for our good and Your glory, like You did with Joseph.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 19,20

Verse 3

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
 My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
 The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
 Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Verse 4

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
 I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
 That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
 I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Words: John Rippon's Selection of Hymns

Music: Joseph Funk's Genuine Church Music

God's people know all God has an unbreakable plan to use all things in their lives for their good. He has planned that even their "fiery trials"—the hardest things that happen to them—that God will use them all to make them like Jesus. They do not have to like the fiery trials, but they can praise God for how He will use them for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

And We Know

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 21

And we know that for those who love God
 all things work together for good,
 And we know that for those who love God
 All things work together for good,
 For those who are called, according to his purpose,
 For those who are called, according to his purpose,

Refrain:

All things work together for good,
 All things work together for good,
 All things, all things, all things, Work together for good.

For those he foreknew, he also predestined,
 For those he foreknew, he also predestined,
 To be conformed to the image of his Son,
 That he might be the firstborn among many.
 To be conformed to the image of his Son,
 That he might be the firstborn among many. Refrain
 Romans Eight, twenty-eight and nine.

Words: Romans 8:28,29 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

God's people are those who love Him. In His great love, He has called them to turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. This is what it means to be justified. But being justified in just the beginning of God's good, forever plans for His people. He also planned for all things in their lives—both enjoyable things and hard things—for the good purpose of making them more like Jesus. Yes, He would use all of them to prepare them for life with Him in heaven, where they would be glorified: forever freed from sin and a pure reflection of God's glory. This is God's wonderful plan for making everything in His people's lives for their good and His glory.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song:

1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV
"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 6:

God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our love for others often changes. Sometimes it is strong; sometimes it is weak. Sometimes it fades away completely. God's love for His people never changes. The Bible calls God's love "hesed:" steady love and kindness, flowing out to sinful people who don't deserve it.

God loved His people before they were created. He kept on loving them when they rebelled against Him. And He chose to send His dear Son, Jesus to save them from their sins. God will go on loving them forever and ever.

Why does God's love for His people never change? It's not because His people are so good and lovable. It's because God loves His people through Jesus, the perfect Son of God, who died for their sins. With His blood, shed on the cross, Jesus made a covenant—a forever promise—with God, His Father. His blood would be the perfect payment for the sins of God's people. He took God's punishment for their sins so they didn't have to bear it themselves.

Because of Jesus, God would forgive them and love them forever. Praise God for sending Jesus! He is why God will never stop loving His people.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 6 Bible Verse:

Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39, ESV

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CASE STORY

The Book of Hosea

Our story is called:

The Case of the Willful Wife.

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

1. Who married the willful wife? Why? What did she do that was so bad?
2. Who was the willful a picture of? Who was her faithful husband a picture of?

This story takes place in Old Testament times, about 750 years before Jesus lived on earth.

Long ago in Israel there lived a man named Hosea. Unlike many of the people of his day, Hosea didn't burn incense to the Baals on the high places; or sacrifice to the golden bull Egeliah at Bethel; or even make offerings to Ashtoreth under the oak trees. Hosea loved the LORD and lived to please Him, not the fake gods that others served.

The LORD called Hosea to be one of His prophets. Now when we think of prophets we usually think of them listening to God, then going to God's people and telling them God's message. But did you know that many times the LORD also had prophets do something, as a picture of what He wanted His people to know? Well, the LORD had Hosea do just this.

What did the LORD have Hosea do as a picture for Israel? Get married! And not just married to any girl of his choosing. No! The LORD told Hosea to marry the daughter of Diblaim. A woman named Gomer.

Now there was something about Gomer that made her not exactly a man's dream wife (and it's not her weird name!). Something so bad that it really made her a nightmare of a wife. You see, Gomer was unfaithful. That is, she was the kind of girl who didn't stay only with her husband, but made money by being with other men and treating them like they were her husband, too.

Gomer's unfaithfulness would make Hosea's marriage to Gomer painfully unhappy. So why would the LORD want Hosea to marry a woman like this? Because Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea was a picture how unfaithful the people of Israel were to the LORD.

"Marry that unfaithful woman Gomer and have children with her," the LORD told Hosea. "Name your first son, Jezreel, your daughter, Lo-Ru-ham-ah, and your second son, Lo-ammi. Your unfaithful wife and the names of your children are to be messages to Israel."

"Then give the people of Israel this message from Me," the LORD told Hosea. "Say to them: 'You people of Israel are just like Gomer. You have been like a unfaithful wife to Me. Remember how I loved you and rescued you from Egypt? Remember how at Mount Sinai we made covenant promises to each other? I promised to always love and protect you. I called you My Treasured Possession. You promised to love and worship Me alone. You would keep all of my commandments,'" the LORD said.

"We celebrated our promises and love with a great feast that day," the LORD continued. "It was like a wedding. All these years, I have always kept the promises made to you that day. I have loved you patiently and tenderly, but you have broken your promises to me over and over again. You split off from the other two tribes of Judah and began to worship the false gods, the Baals. You fellowshipped with them by eating the raisin cakes dedicated to them at their altars. You have bowed down to the golden bull, Egeliah. You have made offerings to Asherah."

"But that is not, all," the LORD told the people of Israel. "You kill and steal. You depend on the kings of faraway countries to take care of you, when you know I promised to take care of you! You have forgotten Me! You have rejected Me! I have kept loving you and been patient with you; and for 700 years you have been unfaithful to Me," the LORD said.

"Are you shocked and disgusted at how Gomer treats Hosea?" the LORD asked the Israelites. "You should be more shocked and disgusted with how you have treated Me! You deserve My forever punishment right now, for the way you've behaved!"

The people of Israel had treated the LORD terribly, but amazingly, still He loved them: "You don't deserve to be my people; yet I still love you so much!" He said. "I will have punish you soon, but because of my love for you, I will give you another chance to turn away from your unfaithfulness to Me," the LORD told them.

"Think about the meaning of the names of Hosea's children," the LORD said. "They are my final warning to you. One son is named 'Jezreel' to remind you of the many people you wrongly killed in the Valley of Jezreel. You will be punished for this if you don't turn away from your sins. His daughter is named 'Lo-Ru-ham-ah.' It means 'not pitied.' Soon I will show you no pity if you do not turn from your sins. His other son is named 'Lo-ammi.' It means 'Not

my people.'" "Soon you will not be my people and I will not be your God anymore, if you do not repent," the LORD warned them. "I have been faithful to you, but you have rejected Me. Please, listen to Me! Turn away from your sinful ways and your fake gods. Turn back to My and My love," the LORD urged the people through Hosea.

How patient and kind the LORD was to these rebellious people! But still they refused to repent. They would keep on worshipping the Baals, eating the raisin cakes, and trusting in kings to protect them.

The Israelites weren't the only ones continuing to stray from the one who faithfully loved them. Gomer, too, strayed away and rejected her loving husband. She fell in love with another man, left Hosea's house and went to live with her new love instead. And if this wasn't bad enough, she got in trouble and needed money to pay her way out of it. She had no money and her lover wouldn't help her. What could she do?

News of his Gomer's problems reached Hosea. How terribly his wife had treated him when he had done nothing but love her! What should he do now? By law, Homer had the right not just to divorce her, but even to stone her to death. At the very least, Hosea surely should just forget about her and let her suffer the consequences of her sins. But that wasn't the LORD's plan.

"Hosea, I want you to love Gomer again, though she is loved by another and has been unfaithful to you. Love her as I love My people, though they have been unfaithful to me. Your faithful love to her will be a picture of My never-ending faithful love for them."

Hosea obeyed the LORD. He bought Gomer for fifteen shekels of silver and about 10 bushels of barley, the price commonly paid for a slave. "Live faithfully to me. I alone am to be your husband, and I will live with you," he told her.

Then Hosea went to all the people of Israel with this message from God: "You have been unfaithful to Me, just like Gomer has been to Hosea. Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears as soon as the sun gets hot. I've been patient with you, but I'm going to send your enemies to destroy you soon, if you do not repent and turn to Me. Say to Me: 'Forgive all our sins and receive us. Never will we call an idol we made with our hands 'our God.' Then I will heal your rebelliousness and love you freely, just like Hosea has taken Gomer back to be his wife."

These words were incredibly merciful, but God's love is

so great for His people that He had even more love to lavish on them: "Yet even if you do not turn back to Me, I will still love you," the LORD told them. "Yes, your enemies will come to take you away as their slaves, but when your punishment is finished, I, Myself, will save you and bring you back home, without using soldiers or weapons. Best of all, the day will come when I will save My people not just from enemy kings and armies, but from the greatest enemy of all: death, itself."

"Hosea paid the price to free Gomer and brought her back home to live with him the rest of her life," the LORD told them. "This is a picture of what I will do for My people. I will pay the price for My people's sins so they can live with Me forever! Then all of My people will seek Me and the Messiah, the Forever King, Jesus. They will know My blessings forever. I will make a new covenant with them. They will no longer love the fake gods, but love Me as a good wife loves only her husband. And I will betroth Myself to them—promising to love them forever and ever. Your sin and unfaithfulness will not come between us anymore. It will be like we are married and perfectly happy, living in love and compassion, justice and righteousness forever," the LORD promised them.

"You have been so unfaithful, yet see how I love you even now! Repent and turn back to Me so I can forgive you and not have to punish you!" the LORD urged.

What a loving God, yet what an unfaithful people! They still refused to turn back to Him. So the LORD punished them just as He promised. First, the Assyrians, then the Babylonians came, destroying the country and carrying away the people into slavery.

Yes, the LORD punished them as promised, but He also kept on loving them. But the LORD also kept on loving them, just as He said He would. When their time of punishment was over, the people went back home and rebuilt their country.

But best of all, at just the right time, the LORD sent the Messiah Jesus to give His life as the payment for His people's sins when He suffered and died on the cross. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He sent the Holy Spirit to live in His people's hearts, filling them with love and joy in Him. They looked forward to the day when the rest of God's promises to them would come true. The day when He would betroth Himself to them forever and they would live with Him in heaven to delight in Him

and enjoy His love forever and ever.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:31-32,35, 37-39:

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Isn't it amazing how God loved those people of Israel! How good and patient He was with them; yet how hard-hearted they were towards Him. But what about you and me? You know, we are not so very different from those Israelites. We have the same sinful hearts as they did. We often find other things besides Him to love and trust in. All too quickly we forget His love that He offers us through Jesus. Yet even to this day, the LORD offers us forgiveness of our sins when we turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. We, too, can be filled with His Holy Spirit. We, too, can rest in knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. We can look forward to the day when He will betroth Himself to us so that we can live with Him in heaven, delighting in Him and enjoying His love forever.

Let's praise God for His faithful, forever love for His people. Let's ask Him to send His Spirit into our hearts, helping us to turn from our sins and trust in Him. Let's ask Him to fill our hearts with more and more love for Him.

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Heavenly Father and we become His adopted children. Answer: True!</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who married the willful wife? Why? What did she do that was so bad? Answer: The prophet Hosea married Gomer because the LORD told him to. She left her husband for other men. b. Who was the willful a picture of? Who was her faithful husband a picture of? Answer: Gomer was a picture of Israel, the LORD's unfaithful people who worshiped other gods, even though they had made a covenant to worship Him. Hosea was a picture of the LORD, who kept forgiving and loving His people, even though they didn't deserve it.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 8:31-32. 35,37-39 "If God is for us, who can be ___ us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall ___ us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than ___ through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor ___ in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Answers: against; separate; conquerors; anything else.</p>	<p>The King of Love <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 23</i></p> <p>Verse 6 And so through all the length of days Thy goodness faileth never. Good shepherd may I sing Thy praise Within Thy house forever.</p> <p>Words: Henry Baker, Psalm 23 Music: Traditional Irish Melody</p> <p>God's people praise God for being the King of love. They delight in having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them that will never end or fail. God takes care of His people like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God promises to always be with His people, taking care of them throughout their whole length of days--their whole lives. And He will go on caring for them even after they die. He will take them to live with Him in heaven forever. How wonderful that will be! No wonder God's people want to sing His praise forever! We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY <i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for Your eternal love for Your people.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times, like the people of Israel and Judah, we choose to disobey You. We do not deserve Your love. 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. Thank You for being so patient with Your people.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts, that we would know You, love You and obey You.</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p> <p>If God Is for Us <i>PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 24</i></p> <p>f God is for us, who can be against us? He did not spare his own Son, But gave him up for us all. How will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things? Whom shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, No, in all these things we are more than conquerors, Through him who loved us. Neither death nor life, nor anything else Will separate us from God's love in Christ. Romans Eight, thirty-one and two, thirty-five, seven through nine.</p> <p>Words adapted from Romans 8:31,32,35,37-39 Constance Dever © 2015</p> <p>God's people may have to go through some very hard things in this life, but they know that none of these things will ever separate them from God. He has always loved them and will always love them. He will be with them, helping them through them all, to the very end. And one day, God will bring them into heaven where they will enjoy His love and the delight of His presence forever.</p>

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song:

1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV
"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 6:

God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our love for others often changes. Sometimes it is strong; sometimes it is weak. Sometimes it fades away completely. God's love for His people never changes. The Bible calls God's love "hesed:" steady love and kindness, flowing out to sinful people who don't deserve it.

God loved His people before they were created. He kept on loving them when they rebelled against Him. And He chose to send His dear Son, Jesus to save them from their sins. God will go on loving them forever and ever.

Why does God's love for His people never change? It's not because His people are so good and lovable. It's because God loves His people through Jesus, the perfect Son of God, who died for their sins. With His blood, shed on the cross, Jesus made a covenant—a forever promise—with God, His Father. His blood would be the perfect payment for the sins of God's people. He took God's punishment for their sins so they didn't have to bear it themselves.

Because of Jesus, God would forgive them and love them forever. Praise God for sending Jesus! He is why God will never stop loving His people.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 6 Bible Verse:

Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39, ESV

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Giant Joy.

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

1. Who came to know Giant Joy? What did the joy come from?
2. How did joy help her through her whole life? What did she look forward to?

Musket shot, cannon fire, soldiers on the march, and Indian attacks. These were all part of life in New England in the early 1700's

The French and British had both begun to settle in the great, new land of America. First there were little settlements of people in colonies along the East Coast. But there was much unexplored land further inland to the west. How big was America? What secrets lay in the wilderness? Both the French and the British wondered in a greedy sort of way. If the riches they had found so far were anything like what lay in the lands beyond, both French and British wanted as much as they could get. They began to fight each other for it.

The French especially used Native Americans to carry out raids on the British. These raids often left villages burned and settlers killed. Life in America back then was not exactly safe and worry-free.

It was into this dangerous, anxious time that a little girl named Sarah Pierrepont was born in the British colony of Connecticut. Her father was the pastor of First Church in New Haven, the most important town in the colony. As a pastor's daughter, Sarah was expected to be trained in all the womanly arts and graces of the day. She had to learn everything from cultured manners and proper tea settings to good literature and fine writing.

Yet there was more to Sarah than just good training. She knew how to put people at ease and was admired for her kindness. And far more important than all these things was what Sarah's treasured in her heart. For as long as she could remember, she had loved God and had a deep sense of His faithful, everlasting love for her. Sarah loved to ramble the countryside and think of God. She sang to Him and prayed to Him as she looked at His beautiful creation around her. She thought much of His saving love shown to her through Jesus; and her heart was filled with joy.

As Sarah grew up, she became very, very beautiful. Many a handsome young man came to her door in hopes of wooing her to be his wife. But Sarah's answer was always "no."

But then, a certain skinny, shy, awkward, young man named Jonathan came along. He wasn't that much to look at, but he had something that Sarah valued more than a good-looking face: Jonathan loved God and took joy in God's faithful, everlasting love for him just like Sarah did. He loved to study God's Word, to preach it and to write about it. This love for God made Jonathan more attractive than all the handsome men who came to her door.

Jonathan felt the same way about Sarah as she felt about him. Like the other men, he could not miss her extraordinary beauty, but it was her love for God and her joy in God's faithful, everlasting love for her that made her irresistible to him. So, at the age of just seventeen, Sarah married Jonathan and they became Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Edwards.

Sarah and Jonathan began their new married life together in Northampton, Massachusetts, where Jonathan had just recently joined his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in pastoring the important Northampton Church that sat in the center of town.

Sarah's first Sunday at Northampton was unforgettable. The whole town awaited her arrival at the church. Pastor's wives were a very big deal back in those days. There were certain customs everyone expected her to keep. She was to wear her wedding dress to church her first Sunday, and twirl slowly around at the front of the church so everyone to get a good view of it from every side. Then, she was to take her place in the special high seat right next to the pulpit that facing towards the congregation, so everyone could watch her during the very long services.

Watch her they did, Sunday after Sunday, for any signs of improper movement or boredom. And you can be certain that if they did see her do even the smallest thing wrong, they would be sure to talk about it. Yes, the pastor's wife was to be more than just a woman who loved God and took joy in His faithful, everlasting love. It seemed she was to be perfect.

Can you imagine what it would be like for everyone to be staring at you and looking for ways you fall short of perfection? It would be easy for Sarah to be anxious or to be angry at those people for treating her this way, but do

you know what she did? Instead of getting worried or mad at people, she turned her thoughts to God. She thought of how His saving love shown to her through Jesus. She knew He loved her with a faithful, everlasting love. That was enough for her. Her heart took joy in God. Suddenly it didn't matter so much what those people thought or said about her.

Jonathan and Sarah stayed in Northampton for twenty years. The LORD blessed both their church and their home in great ways during those years. The LORD began to work powerful things when Jonathan preached. Many people became deeply convicted of their sins. They would wail loudly and ask God for mercy. As they turned from their sins and trusted in Jesus, the Holy Spirit filled their hearts with such peace that they would shout for joy. This happened over and over for many years.

After a while, the same, amazing things began to happen in many other churches in New England, too. Many people became Christians. This joyful time was called "The Great Awakening" because so many people became "awake" to God—which is another way of saying they were saved.

Northampton Church grew and grew during the Great Awakening. Many weeks, thirty people would become Christians at one time. With so many people coming to church and being saved, Jonathan was busier than ever. On top of caring for church members, he would often spend thirteen hours a day studying the Bible and writing sermons!

Things were as busy at home for Sarah as they were for Jonathan at church. Sarah took care of their eleven children as well as did most of the work on the farm. She cared for the many visitors who dropped by their house and tended to guests and young apprentice pastors who would live with them, sometimes for months at a time.

Sarah did everything she could to encourage Jonathan in his preaching and writing. She and the children were up with him at 5 a.m. to read a chapter in the Bible by candlelight, then kept working hard all day and long into the night, while Jonathan worked in his study. Sarah could have easily been a grumbling, bitter woman because of all the hard work she had to do, often without much help from Jonathan; but she was not. She loved the Lord and she loved what He was doing through her husband. She was so glad that she could help him be ready to tell others

about God's faithful, everlasting love that they could know, too. So instead of seeing a grumbling, bitter woman, when people talked to Sarah and watched Sarah, they saw the joy that she had in her heart.

One evening, the Lord added even more to the joy Sarah had. As she was praying, He revealed His love to her heart in an indescribably wonderful way. As she understood more of His love for her, she felt at peace with whatever He wanted to do with her life. She trusted He always knew what was best and would always be with her. More than ever she knew His faithful, everlasting love for her.

How kind it was of the Lord to give Sarah this special taste of His faithful, unfailing love! It would be her special comfort in the many hard times that were soon to come! Jerusha, their second daughter died of tuberculosis when she was only seventeen years old. Later, the Northampton Church members got mad at Jonathan for wanting only Christians to take the Lord's Supper as the Bible says. They fired him with no pay. Jonathan and Sarah had to somehow scrape together enough money to feed their large family for a whole year before Jonathan had another money-making job.

Hardest of all was the year when their daughter Esther, her husband, Aaron, and Jonathan, himself, died. Later that year Sarah became deathly sick with dysentery.

It would have been easy for Sarah to feel abandoned and discouraged through all these sad, hard times; but she was not. She was very sad and things were very hard, but, she loved the Lord and her heart was filled with the indescribably, wonderful joy of knowing His faithful, everlasting love than for her and for these others who also were His people. This was her comfort to the very last moment of her life on earth. And no doubt, it was her shout of praise in the first moments in her dear Lord's presence in heaven and even today, where she still delights in His love and will forever.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:31-32,35, 37-39:

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Did you know that these verses were Sarah Edward's favorite verses in the Bible? What joy Sarah Edwards took in God's everlasting love for her! How it gave her strength to make it through so many hard things!

What about you and me? Can we know the joy of God's faithful, everlasting love for us? Yes, we can; if we turn from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior.

Let's praise God for His faithful, everlasting love for His people. Let's ask Him to help us turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to fill our hearts with the joy of His faithful, everlasting love for us.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God still loved His people when they rebelled against Him.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who came to know Giant Joy? What did the joy come from?

Answer: Sarah Edwards. From knowing God and enjoying His fellowship in her heart, by the Holy Spirit.

b. How did joy help her through her whole life? What did she look forward to?

Answer: Even when things were very hard, the joy of knowing God helped her to endure the hard things in the way that God wanted her to. She knew that one day she would go to be with God and live in His presence forever. There, she would be wonderfully happy, knowing and enjoying Him more fully than ever she would in life here on earth.

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

Romans 8:31-32. 35,37-39

"If ___ is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of ___? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor ___, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our ___."

Answers: God; Christ; life; Lord.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the God who loves Your people forever.

C God, we confess that many times, we are not like Sarah. We complain, become angry or bitter when hard things happen to us or those we love.

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 turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Give us hearts that take joy in You instead of grumble and complain when hard things happen to us.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 23

Verse 6

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never.
Good shepherd may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house forever.

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

God's people praise God for being the King of love. They delight in having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them that will never end or fail. God takes care of His people like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God promises to always be with His people, taking care of them throughout their whole length of days--their whole lives. And He will go on caring for them even after they die. He will take them to live with Him in heaven forever. How wonderful that will be! No wonder God's people want to sing His praise forever! We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If God Is for Us

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 24

f God is for us, who can be against us?
He did not spare his own Son,
But gave him up for us all.
How will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things?
Whom shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall tribulation or distress, persecution, famine, nakedness,
No, in all these things we are more than conquerors,
Through him who loved us.
Neither death nor life, nor anything else
Will separate us from God's love in Christ.
Romans Eight, thirty-one and two,
thirty-five, seven through nine.

Words adapted from Romans 8:31,32,35,37-39
Constance Dever © 2015

God's people may have to go through some very hard things in this life, but they know that none of these things will ever separate them from God. He has always loved them and will always love them. He will be with them, helping them through them all, to the very end. And one day, God will bring them into heaven where they will enjoy His love and the delight of His presence forever.

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

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

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

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

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 6:

God Will Never Stop Loving His People

Our love for others often changes. Sometimes it is strong; sometimes it is weak. Sometimes it fades away completely. God's love for His people never changes. The Bible calls God's love "hesed:" steady love and kindness, flowing out to sinful people who don't deserve it.

God loved His people before they were created. He kept on loving them when they rebelled against Him. And He chose to send His dear Son, Jesus to save them from their sins. God will go on loving them forever and ever.

Why does God's love for His people never change? It's not because His people are so good and lovable. It's because God loves His people through Jesus, the perfect Son of God, who died for their sins. With His blood, shed on the cross, Jesus made a covenant—a forever promise—with God, His Father. His blood would be the perfect payment for the sins of God's people. He took God's punishment for their sins so they didn't have to bear it themselves.

Because of Jesus, God would forgive them and love them forever. Praise God for sending Jesus! He is why God will never stop loving His people.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 6 Bible Verse:

Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39, ESV

"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

CASE STORY

Acts 17,18; 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Our story is: The Case of the Forward-Lookers.

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

1. Who were the Forward-Lookers? What were they going through that was hard?
2. What were they looking forward to? How did this help them with what they endured?

This story takes place in New Testament times, about 15 years after Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven.

How hard the last, few years had been! Full of traveling and troubles for Paul, Silas and Timothy! They had been traveling through Galatia sharing the good news of Jesus and visiting the little churches of Lystra, Derbe, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch. They made plans to go next to Bithinia.

But one night in Troas, God changed Paul's plans. In a vision, Paul saw a man not from Asia but Macedonia standing before him. The man spoke to him "Come over to Macedonia and help us," he begged.

Paul felt sure this from the Lord. The next morning, Paul told his friends: "Luke, Timothy, and Silas, we're not going west to Bithinia anymore. The Lord wants us to go east to Macedonia instead."

So off they went. They sailed from Troas across the Aegean Sea to Neapolis, a seaport in Macedonia. From there they set out walking the Via Egnatia, the Roman highway connecting the cities of Macedonia.

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke stopped first at Philippi, then Thessaloníki, then Berea. At each city, Paul preached the good news of Jesus to gatherings of Jews and God-fearing Greek and Romans at the Jewish Sabbath worship services. Paul and his friends rejoiced as many in Macedonia repented of their sins and trusted Jesus as their own Savior.

But not everyone was happy about these new Christians—and this is where the troubles came in! Most of the Jews, Greeks and Romans rejected the gospel of Jesus....and would do most anything to stop Paul and his friends from sharing it with others. So in Philippi, Paul and Silas beaten with sticks on their bare backs, then put locked up in chains and thrown in prison.

In Thessaloníki, an angry mob of Greeks and Jews beat upon the door of Jason's house, demanding Paul and Silas be handed over to them for punishment. The crowd

wanted to silence their teaching that Jesus was the Son of God who reigned in heaven as king and one day would return to set up His everlasting kingdom. The Jews thought it dishonored God to call Jesus His Son. The Greeks and Romans thought it dishonored Caesar to call Jesus King. Not able to find Paul, the crowd grabbed Jason and some of the other believers to punish in their place. Paul and his friends hid out until dark then slipped out of Thessaloníki.

Things were no easier for them in Berea. Jews who stirred up trouble in Thessaloníki came there to stir up the Bereans against Paul, too. Paul was only able to get out of Berea alive with a special escort of men who sneaked him out of town and took him all the way down the coast to leave the country.

Was this what it meant to “help” the Macedonians, as the Lord had told Paul in his vision? Did Paul begin to doubt whether it was such a good idea to go to Macedonia? Yes, many Macedonians had been saved from their sins, but now they also were being hurt by enemies. Was it really worth it?

Paul knew that it was. It was true that the lives of Christians were often filled with trials and persecutions. If this life was all there was, then Christians should be pitied for spending it suffered for Jesus like this. Yet Paul knew this life wasn't all there was! No! There was so much more to life than just this earthly life! There was a whole FOREVER with Jesus waiting for believers after they died. The Jews might not like to hear it, but Jesus really was the Messiah, the Son of God. He really did die on the cross for their sins. He did rise from the dead and now reigns in heaven. The Romans and Greeks might not like to hear it, but one day Jesus really would come back and right all wrongs. He would put an end to all evil. Then, in the new heavens and earth, Jesus would set up His kingdom where His people would praise Him and know His love forever. Yes, there might be suffering in this life for Paul and these new believers, but it would not be forever. God was faithful and He would do all He had promised. A Forever of love awaited them. This is what Paul thought about as he and the other Christians faced these trials. He would press on, looking forward to that day. He would pray that the little churches of believers back in Berea, Philippi and Thessaloníki would, too.

Paul and his friends left Macedonia and traveled on to Greece where there were thousands more who needed to hear about Jesus. Even so, Paul and his friends could not

forget the Macedonians. “How were they doing? Were they suffering for believing in Jesus? Were they holding on to their faith in Him?

At last, Paul could stand it no longer. He just had to hear something. “Silas, I want you to go back to check up on the Philippians and the Bereans. Timothy, will you go back to Thessaloníki? Check up on the believers and bring word back to me down there,” Paul urged them. Timothy and Silas were happy to go. They left and headed back over to Macedonia.

Weeks passed. Paul kept telling the good news of Jesus in Greece, but he eagerly awaited Timothy's and Silas' return. At last Silas returned from Philippi. The believers were doing well and were growing in godliness and love for each other. Their sufferings had not caused them to turn away from their faith in Jesus. Paul was so happy!

Then Timothy brought news from Thessaloníki. The Thessalonian believers had suffered a lot. Some had even died. They had many fears. Some were afraid that believers who did die before Jesus came back would miss out on the good things He promised. Others were afraid that Jesus had already come back and they had missed Him completely. But despite all their suffering and their fears, the LORD had kept them strong in their faith in Jesus.

The three friends praised God together. How faithful God had been to His people in those little churches of Macedonia! They needed help and encouragement, but but by God's grace they stood firm in the faith. In first one letter and then another, Paul, Silas and Timothy wrote words of encouragement to the Thessalonian believers:

“From Paul, Silas and Timothy:

To the church of the Thessalonians:

“Ever since we left you, we've been wondering how you were doing. We were afraid that you might have stop believing in Jesus and encouraged that you are standing strong in your faith.

“Don't be discouraged about your sufferings. These are expected in this life. Don't worry that Jesus has already come or that those of you who have already died will miss out on anything the LORD has prepared for His people. On the day He comes, you won't be able to miss Him! Jesus will come down from heaven with a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. The dead in Christ will rise from the dead first; then we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together

with them in the clouds to meet Him in the air.”

“You might be suffering now, but it won’t be for forever. For on that day, Jesus will right all wrongs and put an end to all evil once and for all. Then, in the new heavens and earth, He will set up His kingdom where His people will praise Him and enjoy His love forever.”

“May God Himself completely prepare you for that day of Jesus’ coming! The One who calls you to live and even suffer for Him is faithful. He will do it!”

“Read this letter to all the believers so that may be encouraged. We hope to visit you soon.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy”

What happened next to the Thessalonians believers? There’s really only two things we know: for many years to come, the Thessalonian believers were known among the churches for enduring their sufferings with a deep love for God and a strong faith in Jesus. And best of all, we know that after each and every one of them died, they went to be with Jesus where they are praising Him and enjoying His love forever even now!

Our Bible Truth is: God Will Always Love His People

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:31-32,35,37-39

“If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any power, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What about you and me? We don’t know what we may face in this life. if we are God’s people—those who have turned from our sins and trusted in Jesus as our Savior. there may be days when we may face suffering for believing in Jesus.

But if we are God’s people, we know that God loves us and cares for us. We know there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ. He will bring us through everything we might have to go through in this life, and then bring us into His kingdom where we will praise Him and enjoy His love forever and ever. Our God is

faithful. He will do it.

Let’s praise God for faithfully loving His people forever and ever. Let’s ask Him to help us to trust Him with our lives and rejoice even if there is suffering and hard times ahead for us. Let’s ask Him to help us to look forward to the day when His people will enjoy His love forever. That can be us, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior!

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Jesus is why God’s love for His people never changes. He took the punishment for their sins.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who were the Forward-Lookers? What were they going through that was hard?

Answer: The Christians in Thessaloniki and Paul. They were suffering for being Christians.

b. What were they looking forward to? How did this help them with what they endured?

Answer: The day when they would go to be with God in heaven. There would be no suffering then. They would enjoy His presence and His love in a far deeper way forever. Knowing that God had a purpose in their suffering now and gave them promises of this wonderful life forever with Him, they kept on loving God and enduring whatever He, in His wisdom and love, allowed.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30

“If God is for ____, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all ____? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through ____ who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the ____ of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Answers: us; things; him; love.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Worker of Your people’s good and Your glory, even in the hardest things that happen to them.

C God, we confess that we are tempted to lie instead of trusting You, God, when we are afraid of punishment, like Joseph’s brothers did. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being true to Your promises and always working out Your good purposes.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to faithfully tell others about You and endure even hard things so that others might hear the good news of Jesus. Help Your people all over the world who even today are enduring hard things because they believe in You. Give them courage! Help them to look forward to the day when their suffering will end and they will be with You forever!

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 23

Verse 6

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never.

Good shepherd may I sing Thy praise

Within Thy house forever.

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

God’s people praise God for being the King of love. They delight in having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them that will never end or fail. God takes care of His people like a good shepherd cares for his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God promises to always be with His people, taking care of them throughout their whole length of days--their whole lives. And He will go on caring for them even after they die. He will take them to live with Him in heaven forever. How wonderful that will be! No wonder God’s people want to sing His praise forever! We can become God’s people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

If God Is for Us

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 24

f God is for us, who can be against us?

He did not spare his own Son,

But gave him up for us all.

How will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things?

Whom shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation or distress, persecution, famine, nakedness,

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors,

Through him who loved us.

Neither death nor life, nor anything else

Will separate us from God’s love in Christ.

Romans Eight, thirty-one and two,

thirty-five, seven through nine.

Words adapted from Romans 8:31,32,35,37-39

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God’s people may have to go through some very hard things in this life, but they know that none of these things will ever separate them from God. He has always loved them and will always love them. He will be with them, helping them through them all, to the very end. And one day, God will bring them into heaven where they will enjoy His love and the delight of His presence forever.