WOMEN WHO SERVED GOD

Mary Small

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The Women's Hymn:

Come Women, wide proclaim
Life through your Saviour slain;
Sing evermore.
Christ, God effulgence bright
Christ, who arose in might
Christ, who crowns you with light
Praise and adore.

2

Come, clasping children's hands,
Sisters from many lands.
Teach and adore;
For the sin-sick and worn
The weak and over-borne
All who in darkness morn,
Pray, work, yet more.

3

Work with your courage high,
Sing of the day-break nigh
Your love out-pour.

THIRD MONTH

1	Romans 16:3-5
2	Matthew 8:24-27
3	Psalm 23:1-3
4	Psalm 23:4-6
5	Psalm 1:1-3
6	Psalm 46:1-3
7	Psalm 42:1-2
8	Psalm 73:23-25, 28
9	Psalm 118:1, 5-6, 14
10	Psalm 121:1-4
11	Psalm 121:5-8
12	Psalm 43:3-4
13	Psalm 40:1-3
14	Psalm 101:1-3
15	Psalm 11:1-4
16	Psalm 119:11-16
17	Romans 3:23
18	Romans 6:23
19	Ephesians 2:8-9
20	John 3:16-18
21	John 1:12-13
22	Matthew 10:32-33
23	Matthew 9:36-38
24	Proverbs 3:1-6
25	Proverbs 7:6-11
26	Proverbs 22:6-9
27	Proverbs 31:10-14
28	Proverbs 31:15-19
29	Proverbs 31:20-24
30	Proverbs 31:25-31

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2	Luke 1:18-20, 23-25
3	Luke 1:41-45
4	Luke 1:57-60
5	Luke 1:61-64, 80
6	Luke 2:25-30
7	Luke 2:36-38
8	Isaiah 53:1-3
9	Isaiah 53:4-6
10	Isaiah 61;1-3
11	Malachi 3:1-3
12	Luke 2:8-11
13	Matthew 2:1-6
14	Matthew 20:20-22
15	Matthew 20:23-25
16	Matthew 20:26-29
17	Matthew 27:54-56
18	Mark 16:1-4
19	Mark 16:5-8
20	Matthew 4:21-22
21	Matthew 27:54-56
22	Matthew 27:59-61
23	Mark 15:40, 41, 47; Mark 16:1
24	Luke 24:1-3, 10
25	Acts 12:11-12
26	Matthew 10:37-39
27	Romans 12:1-5
28	Acts 18;1-3
29	Acts 18:18-19
30	Acts 18:24-26
31	1 Corinthians 16:19-21

DAILY BIBLE READING

FIRST MONTH

1	Exodus 1:7-14
2	Exodus 1:15-22
3	Exodus 2:1-4
4	Exodus 2:5-10
5	Exodus 15:20-21
6	Numbers 12:1-2, 11-13
7	Numbers 20:1
8	Judges 2:10-15
9	Judges 2:16-23
10	Judges 4:1-3
11	Judges 4:4-9
12	Judges 4:10-17
13	Judges 4:18-24
14	Acts 16:31
15	Philippians 4:19
16	1 Kings 17:1-4
17	1 Kings 17:5-8
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24	2 Kings 4:15-20
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26	2 Kings 4:27-31
27	2 Kings 4:32-37
28	2 Kings 8:1-6
29	Luke 1:5-7
30	Luke 1:8-12

INTRODUCTION

The topic for this three months of study is "Women Who Served God." We shall study about women who lived long ago. Others lived in more recent years. We shall learn some helpful lessons from their lives. We shall learn ways in which we can serve God today.

It is our prayer that these lessons will help each one of you to be a better mother, wife, and Christian. Ask God to lead you as you study these chapters each week.

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. v.26. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."

This woman herself has set a good example of right conduct. She had spiritual strength.

These days we need strength from God to live as we should live. God will give that strength when we walk with him. He will not give strength if we do not want to follow his will in our lives.

We learn that we must speak kindly. It is not good when we talk badly about others.

LEADER: Perhaps all of us are saying: "It is quite true, we cannot do these things alone. God will help us."

First of all we must be sure that we have a right relationship with God. When we have truly repented of our sins and received Jesus as our Saviour, we are ready to walk in the way of God. God will give strength and leadership every day as we read our Bibles and pray.

Let us read in Proverbs 31 again: v.28. "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:" When we do these things we have learned about today, our children and husband will speak well concerning us. Most of all, we will be pleasing God by our manner of living. Remember the words of our memory verse: "A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." Proverbs 31:30b.

Let us ask God to help us walk in his way.

PART THREE: Her relationship to others

When this woman in Proverbs 31 saw someone who did not have as much as she had, what did she do? "She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy." Proverbs 31:20.

We can see this woman as she shared the things she had with other people.

The lesson we learn is this: we should share with those about us who are in need. If a person is just too lazy to provide for himself, God does not expect us to waste our things on him. But God does expect us to share with those who are in real need.

PART FOUR: Her relationship to her family

Let us read again from Proverbs 31: v.21. "She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet. v.22. She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple. v.27. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness."

This woman did all she could to provide well for her family. She did not worry when the cold weather came. She had done her best to take care of them.

You say, "But I cannot do that these days." Yes, we can do our best to take care of the needs of our families. We can keep the clothes clean and mended. We can help our husbands by using wisely the money which he earns. Again, we must not be idle or lazy.

PART FIVE: The woman herself

Once again we want to hear the words from Proverbs 31: v.17. "She girds her loins with strength and makes her arms strong. v.25.

CHAPTER 1

MIRIAM

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus 2:1-4

MEMORY VERSE: *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
1 Corinthians 15:57

PRAYER:

LEADER: Miriam is the first woman in the Bible who had an interest in national affairs. She was a leader among the women of the nation of Israel. Today we shall study about her life. We will also learn some lessons for our lives today.

PART ONE: MIRIAM - The country in which she lived

The people of the nation of Israel were living in Egypt. For a long time they had been slaves of the people of Egypt. They worked very hard. They continued to believe in God and to worship him. The ruler of Egypt became very worried about the people of Israel. He thought that they were too strong as a nation. Therefore, he gave this command to the midwives: "...if it is a son, you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, she shall live." Exodus 1:16b. When this command was given, Miriam was a little girl perhaps seven years old. She had a brother, Aaron, who was perhaps three years old. Then Miriam's mother was with child again. The mother just trusted God to take care of her and the un-born child.

PART TWO: MIRIAM - Sister of Moses

Time passed and a baby boy was born into the home. The mother hid the baby for three months in the home. We are not told in the Bible what Miriam did during these three months. Because she was the oldest child, we can imagine that she helped her mother very much in taking care of Aaron and the new baby.

The time came when the mother could not hide the baby any longer so she made a basket. She prepared it in such a way that water could not enter it. Then she put the baby inside the basket and took it to the river. There the mother placed the basket in the tall grass at the edge of the river. Nearby she left Miriam to watch the basket with the baby inside it. Miriam had much courage. Also she was not afraid. She and the mother knew well that this was the very place where the daughter of the king always came to bathe.

Soon the daughter of the king came to the river. She saw the basket. One of the young ladies with her was sent to take the basket from the river. When the king's daughter opened the basket she found Miriam's little brother - Moses.

At once Miriam ran to the king's daughter. She asked, "Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Exodus 2:7. The king's daughter answered, "Go." Miriam ran home and brought her own mother. God had answered their prayers of faith. He had saved the life of the little baby Moses.

PART THREE: MIRIAM - A leader of the women

Many years had passed in the life of the Children of Israel before Miriam is mentioned again. The Bible tells us nothing of what Miriam did while Moses was growing up .

trusts in her, and he will have no lack of grain." v.12. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life."

The husband knows that his wife loves him. He knows that she is faithful to him in all things.

So it should be today. The husband should know that he can trust his wife in everything. Christian wife, you should always be true to your husband --- in your words and in your actions. If he is not a Christian, perhaps you can win him to the Lord through your way of living. (Read 1 Peter 3:1-2).

PART TWO: Her relationship to her work

Let us read again from Proverbs 31: v.13 "She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. v.14. She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from afar. v.15. She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and tasks for her maidens. v.16 She considers a field and buys it;with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. v.18. She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night. v.19. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. v.24. She makes linen garments and sells them;she delivers girdles to the merchant."

The woman about whom we have just read worked hard. She was not lazy.

Today, God wants each of us to do our best with all work. Perhaps we do not have much land for a garden. Perhaps we cannot do many of the things in these verses. But we can do our very best with the things we have. We must not just sit and do nothing. God is very displeased when we are lazy.

CHAPTER 13

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Proverbs 31:10-12

MEMORY VERSE: *...a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*
Proverbs 31:10-12

PRAYER:

LEADER: During the past three months we have studied about women who served God. Some of these women lived during Old Testament times. Some of them lived during the days of Jesus. Others helped to begin the early churches. Others lived not many years ago.

Today we are studying about the kind of woman with whom God is pleased. This woman does not have a name. In fact, we are studying the things with which God was pleased in her life. Many of these things were found in the lives of many Christian women of the past. They are found in the lives of many Christian women today.

PART ONE: Her relationship to her husband

In Proverbs 31:10 we read: "A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels." Then the writer goes on to tell us about the virtuous woman. It will be good for us to read the verses from this passage. Then we will look for the lessons for us today.

We read regarding her relationship to her husband: v.11. "The heart of her husband

There is no record of her during the time when Moses and Aaron were pleading with Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt. However, I think we can be sure that she was taking care of the needs of her people. We can also be sure that she was honoured as the sister of Moses and Aaron.

We read about Miriam again just as the children of Israel were leaving Egypt. At this time she had an important place among the Hebrew women. We read in Exodus 15:20 these words: "Then Miriam, the prophetess,....." The word "prophetess" means a woman who is inspired to teach the will of God. It can also mean the wife of a prophet. However, there is no record of the fact that Miriam was ever married.

In order to leave the land of Egypt, the children of Israel had to cross the Red Sea. The king had said that the people could leave. However, he changed his mind after they left. He and his soldiers began to follow them. God provided a way of escape. He caused the waters of the Red Sea to part. There was a path of dry land across the sea. The children of Israel crossed over on this dry land. The Egyptians began to follow them through the sea. However, while they were still in the middle of the Red Sea, the children of Israel arrived safely on the other side. God caused the waters of the Red Sea to return to their place. The Egyptians were drowned.

Here we see Miriam as a leader among the women. She took a timbrel (a musical instrument) in her hand and led all the women in a song of thanksgiving to God. They praised God for their deliverance from the Egyptians. (Read Exodus 15:21).

PART FOUR: MIRIAM - Her sin against God and Moses

Again, some time had passed before we read more about Miriam. Next we see Miriam and

Aaron as they spoke against their brother Moses. (Read Numbers 12:1-2). This shows a weakness in the character of Miriam. She did not like the fact that Moses had married a woman from another nation.

God heard the things which Miriam and Aaron were saying against Moses. He was very displeased. God called Miriam, Aaron and Moses to the tabernacle - the place where the people worshipped God. God spoke to them in defense of Moses. When God departed, Miriam was with leprosy. This indicated that she was the leader of the trouble. Aaron begged for forgiveness. Miriam had to remain alone outside the camp for seven days. Moses prayed to God that Miriam might be healed. All of the children of Israel waited until Miriam could join them again before they continued their journey to the Promised Land. Miriam had learned two lessons:

1. God is not pleased with those who have racial prejudices.
2. God is not pleased when people speak against his chosen leaders who are following his will.

The last time we read about Miriam is in Numbers 20:1. She died before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land.

LEADER: As we have studied about Miriam today we have learned some lessons.

1. Her mother taught her to have faith in God. We, too, should teach our children to have faith in God.
2. She was a leader in giving praise to God for his deliverance of the children of Israel. We should always praise God for the deliverance from sin that we have in Jesus.

It was the day before Christmas in 1912. Lottie Moon was on a ship. It was in harbour at Kobe, Japan. A missionary nursing sister sat beside her. She was there to take care of Lottie Moon. Suddenly, Lottie began to move. Her hands were clasped together in the handshake of greeting used among the people whom she loved. It was in this way, with a smile of greeting and the whisper of a friends name, that Lottie Moon died.

She had served God a long time. She had been faithful in her service.

LEADER: Today we have studied the life of a great Baptist missionary. We can learn some lessons from her life.

When God spoke to her, she obeyed. God had caused her to know that she needed to repent and be saved. She accepted Jesus as her Saviour. When she knew that God wanted her to go to China, she answered "I am ready to go."

Today when God speaks to us, we must obey him. We must obey him in salvation. We must obey him in our church and in our homes. Perhaps he will not call us to go to another country to witness for him. He does call all Christians that they might witness for him wherever they live.

Let us pray "I am ready, Lord, to obey you. Give me strength and wisdom that I might follow your leading."

Her younger sister had gone to China before Lottie arrived. About three years after Lottie arrived in China her sister became very ill. Lottie accompanied her sister to the family home in America. Then, immediately Lottie returned to the work of God in China.

For many years she served God among the people of China. At one time she wrote to a friend saying, "I wish that I had a thousand lives that I might give them in service to the women of China."

She continued to write letters to America asking for other people to come and help with the work of God. She needed a young lady to do the work for her during her leave. Her pleas helped the Baptist women's groups in America to act. Letters were sent to women's groups asking that a Christmas offering be given in their meetings. This money would help to pay the salary of a young women to replace Lottie Moon. Everyone was surprised and happy when the money was enough to send two new missionaries to China.

From then until now, Baptist people in America give an offering during the month of December. All of this money is used in Baptist Mission work around the world. It is called the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. Many of our church buildings here in Zambia have been made possible through this offering.

PART FOUR: LOTTIE MOON - Her death

Lottie served God for 39 years in China. At the age of 72 years, she started on her last journey to America. She was sick, very sick. She had worked hard, helping the people of China know about God and his love. Many people had been saved because she told them the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She had used her life in service to God.

3. Sin in the life of any person is a terrible thing. Let us ask God to give us courage and faith in him.

Let us ask God to take away any prejudices and hate which may be in our hearts. Let us ask God to help us lead a friend to him.

CHAPTER 2

DEBORAH

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Judges 4:4-9

MEMORY VERSE: *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.*
Acts 16:31

PRAYER:

LEADER: Deborah lived about 1300 years before the birth of Jesus. This means that she lived more than 3,000 years ago. During that time women usually did not have places of leadership in civic and political matters. However, Deborah had a place of leadership. In this place of leadership, she served God.

PART ONE: DEBORAH-The time in which she lived

The time in which Deborah lived was known as the "time of the Judges." Israel did not have a king or a national leader. Therefore many troubles arose inside the nation as well as outside the nation. Repeatedly the people forgot god and the lessons they had learned in the past. They turned to the worship of idols and sinned in many other ways. God would allow one of the nations to conquer Israel. This thing caused them to remember God and pray to him. Then God would send a judge to lead the people back to him. Upon the death of that judge, many of the people would forget God again. They would turn to the ways of sin once more.

It was during one of these times of trouble that the first woman judge, Deborah, appeared.

to tell her friends that she had repented. In a letter to a relative she wrote: "I went to the preaching service last night to laugh. I returned to my room to pray all night."

Lottie had repented truly in her heart. She had received Jesus as her Saviour.

PART TWO: LOTTIE MOON - Her call to serve God

Lottie became a school teacher. For a time she taught in a small school at her home. Her younger sister was one of the pupils. Then she taught in other places. The pastor of the Baptist Church in one of these places wrote these words: "Miss Moon taught here for two years. Everyone loved her. She was a faithful teacher in our Sunday School. On Sunday afternoons, she would find destitute families and teach them the word of God." She was serving God where she lived.

She had heard of the need of the lost peoples of China. Then one evening, following a missionary sermon, Lottie made her decision. She said to her pastor, "I have long known that God wanted me in China. I am now ready to go."

Lottie began to prepare for her long journey to China. On August 18, 1873, Lottie left America by ship to go to the place where God wanted her to serve him. October 7, 1873, she reached the end of her journey.

PART THREE: LOTTIE MOON - In China

Lottie soon began to study the language of the people. She went with other missionaries when they visited the villages. As she told the people about God and his love, she found the same thing that each of us finds today. Some listened well and believed. Others refused God. Yet she continued to serve God.

CHAPTER 12

LOTTIE MOON

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 9:36-38

MEMORY VERSE: *The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.*
Lamentations 3:25

PRAYER:

LEADER: Today we shall study about a woman who served God in the country of China. She did many wonderful things among the women of that country. We shall only have time to study briefly about this women named Lottie Moon.

PART ONE: LOTTIE MOON - Her early life and conversion

Lottie Moon was born in America in 1840 - more than 125 years ago. Her mother and father had other children. As a young girl Lottie enjoyed doing things in order to have a good time. She was a very happy child.

Lottie learned well in school. In fact she always made good marks. She was a good leader in everything. In 1859, she entered a school of higher learning. During that year the school had a revival meeting. Lottie herself was not a Christian. A group of the girls met early morning during the revival for a time of prayer. At these meetings the girls prayed much for the conversion of Lottie Moon.

At first she laughed at the girls. Then one morning she came to this prayer meeting

PART TWO: DEBORAH, the judge

The Bible speaks of Deborah as a "prophetess." We remember that the word "prophetess" means "a woman who speaks for God." She was the wife of a man named Lappidoth. She held court under a palm tree in the hill country of Ephraim. Sometimes the judges traveled throughout the land of Israel hearing cases and judging them. But Deborah did not travel. She remained at home. The people came to her with their troubles. In Judges 4:5b we read: "...and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment." She had a great faith in God. She was able to lead others to have faith in God.

The important thing in the life of Deborah was that she was chosen by God to be the judge at that time. God chose her to make his will known to the Israelites, his chosen people. Deborah was the one through whom God brought deliverance. The people listened to Deborah. They accepted her judgments.

PART THREE: DEBORAH - In time of national crisis

As punishment for their sinful ways of living, God had allowed Jabin, the king of Canaan, to capture the people of Israel. Jabin did many terrible things to the Israelites. He took away their cattle. He destroyed their gardens and homes. Trouble and suffering filled the land.

Sisera was the captain of King Jabin's army. He had many soldiers at his command. He also had 900 chariots made of iron. These were war chariots. They were open at the back. Each chariot had a driver. Each one had a soldier with weapons for fighting. Each one had a person whose work was to protect the soldier. These big chariots could only be used in flat country. They were of no use in the hills.

The people of Israel were frightened of Sisera and his soldiers. Deborah sent for a man named Barak that he might come and help her. Barak came and listened to the words of God from Deborah. (Read this command in Judges 4:6-7). God commanded Barak to take ten thousand (10,000) men and go toward the mountain. God had a plan for deliverance. There was the promise of victory.

Barak knew that God was leading Deborah. He also knew that he himself would need Deborah's advice. Therefore, he answered, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go."Judges 4:8. Deborah answered that she would go with him. She told Barak that he would not receive the honour for the victory. She said, "...for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a " woman." (Read Judges 4:9).

PART FOUR: DEBORAH - The victory.

Barak gathered the men together as Deborah had said. Word reached Sisera that Barah and his soldiers had gone to Mount Tabor. Sisera began to prepare for war.

When the time came, Deborah said to Barak, "Up! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hand. Does not the Lord go out before you?" Judges 4:14.

Victory was theirs. God sent a storm upon the army of Sisera. The soldiers ran from Barak and his men. The Chariots could not move because of the mud and water. Sisera left his chariot and ran away. He reached the tent of a person whom he thought was a friend. The woman gave him food and a place to rest. Then while he was sleeping, she killed Sisera. Soon Barak arrived at the tent. The women went out to meet Barak and said to him, "Come, and I will show you the man whom you are seeking." Judges 4:22b. It was just as Deborah had

she had written hundreds of songs. Many people came to trust in Jesus as their Saviour upon hearing the gospel message contained in her songs. It can never be known how many thousands of Christians have been strengthened in their Christian life through the hymns she has given to the world.

There were many other ways in which Fanny Crosby served God. Although she was blind, she taught other blind,people. She helped them to live a better life. Because of her great wisdom, many people sought her advice. She was able to point them to the will of God for their lives. She was also a very popular speaker. She told of the love and grace of God in many different places, to thousands of different people.

LEADER: I have in my hand a Bible. It is made of paper, cloth, and printed words. It tells the way of salvation. It also tells how the Christian can live a life according to the will of God. The same paper and cloth could have been used to make a very evil book. The great difference between the Bible and an evil book is not the materials but who used the materials. Men who love God can take paper and cloth and print a Bible. Men who do the will of Satan can take paper and cloth and make a book which will poison the minds of people.

Fanny Crosby placed her life in the hands of God. He made something beautiful from it. Her life has been used to bless many people around the world for more than a hundred years. We can never know how well she served God until we arrive in heaven and learn of all the people whom she helped to know God. She did not excuse herself from service to God because of her blindness. We must not excuse ourselves from serving God. Let us put ourselves in the hands of God. Then he can do with us as he wishes.

placing her fingers on pages which had raised letters so that she could feel them with her fingers.

PART TWO: Her ability as a poet

It was soon noticed that there was one thing which Fanny did very well. She could make poems. Her first one was written when she was only eight years old. Her relatives and friends encouraged her to do this work. By the time she was a young lady, many of her poems had been printed. She had also written the words for some songs which were well known and enjoyed by many people.

PART THREE: Her conversion

Fanny had learned much about the Bible. Often she went to church. However, she did not become a Christian until she was 31 years old. One night she dreamed that a friend had died. In the dream the friend asked Fanny to meet her in heaven. This caused Fanny to begin thinking very seriously about the things of God. A song helped her to come to know Jesus as Saviour. She gave her life to Jesus as she heard these words:

"But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do."

She realised that only Christ could save her. There was nothing she could do in her own strength to earn salvation. All she could do was to give her life to Jesus who had died for her. She did it and found peace and happiness.

PART FOUR: Her service to God

After Fanny had given her life to Jesus, she began to write many beautiful songs about the Christian faith. By the time of her death

prophesied. (See Judges 4:9). God gave the victory to Deborah, Barak, and the people of Israel.

Deborah and Barak sang a song to give thanks to God. "That the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people offered themselves willingly, bless the Lord!" Judges 5:2. This song is found in the 5th chapter of Judges. Throughout the song we can feel Deborah's faith in God. We can also know that she was thankful for the victory. Now her people were free. They were no longer slaves of another nation. This song of thanks is followed by these words: "And the land had rest for forty years." Judges 5:31b.

LEADER: Today we are like the people of Deborah's time. We forget God and his blessings to us. This lesson today should remind us that it is a sin to forget God. We forget God when we continually fail to pray. We forget God when we continually fail to attend church and worship together with others. (You, the leader, may name other ways in which we forget God). Let us ask God to help us that we might remember him and the blessings which he gives to us.

As women, we can serve God just as Deborah served God. Her faith in God helped Barak. It also helped the soldiers of Israel to have more faith in God. If our faith in God is strong, then we can lead others to have faith in him. Let us ask God to help us lead others to him.

CHAPTER 3

THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Kings 17:12-13, 24.

MEMORY VERSE: *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19*

PRAYER:

LEADER: In our lesson today we do not know the name of the woman who served God. She is known only by the name of the village in which she lived. This woman had been married. Her husband had died. She had one son. Today we shall see how the widow of Zarephath learned about having faith in God.

PART ONE: God sent the prophet, Elijah, to the widow

For two and a half years there had been a drought in the land where the widow lived. Before the drought, Elijah had stood before King Ahab. He had told the king that God would send the drought. This was punishment for the sins of the people. Then God sent the prophet that he might live near the stream called Cherith. There the prophet could find water to drink. God would send him food. After a time the stream dried up. God said to Elijah, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you."
1 Kings 17:9.

CHAPTER 11

FANNY CROSBY

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 101:1-3

MEMORY VERSE: *I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come?*
Psalm 121:1

PRAYER:

LEADER: Today we shall study about a woman who was born nearly 150 years ago. Her name was Fanny Crosby. When she was only six weeks old her eyes became infected. In a very short time she was blind. Perhaps you are asking, "But how could a woman serve God who was blind from the time of her infancy?" This is a surprising thing. It is wonderful to know how God used this woman.

PART ONE: Her childhood

Fanny Crosby refused to just sit and allow blindness to ruin her life. She grew up as a cheerful girl who was interested in all that was happening around her. She was even able to play some of the games with other children. Her grandmother was a special help to her. She would sit for hours and tell her blind granddaughter stories. The grandmother was Fanny's eyes. She saw the beauties of God's world. She described all these things to Fanny. Of course, Fanny could not read the Bible at that time. Her wise Grandmother helped her to memorise many long passages from the Bible. Later she learned to read by

life and the message of salvation. From this beginning, the work grew. Now there are many strong churches in Burma.

All these things came to pass partly because a beautiful, talented young woman loved Jesus. She placed her life in the hands of God. Let us also say to Jesus, "I will go where you want me to go. I will do what you want me to do."

In the town of Zarephath the widow and her son were hungry. Only a little bit of meal and oil remained in the house. She must have been very discouraged because of the lack of food. She went out to gather firewood.

As she was gathering the firewood, Elijah saw her. God had sent Elijah to this woman. Elijah's own faith had been tested. He had learned to believe that God was able to care for him. Now he was able to assure the widow that God would take care of her. Elijah said to the woman: "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." 1 Kings 17:10b She started to get the water. Then Elijah said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." 1 Kings 17:11.

PART TWO: The widow's faith is tested

She replied that she did not have any bread. She told the prophet that there remained only a little meal and a little oil. Her plan was to build a fire and cook that small amount of food. Then she and her son would die from hunger.

Elijah said, "Fear not; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make for yourself and your son." 1 Kings 17:13. Remember the woman was hungry. Her son was hungry, too. What would you have done if you had been in the place of the widow? In 1 Kings 17:14 Elijah spoke words of promise to her. (Read this verse). What a test of faith for a hungry mother and son. What a wonderful promise.

PART THREE: The widow's faith is strengthened

The widow listened to the words of Elijah. He had said that he must be fed first from the bit of meal and oil. She made a cake of bread. She used meal from the barrel. She

used oil from the bottle. What an act of faith. As a result of her obedience to the prophet's command, she was to know the fulfilment of the promise.

During the remaining time of the drought, she witnessed a miracle every day. We are told in 1 Kings 17:15b "she, and he, and her household ate for many days."

At this point, we learn two lessons from the life of the widow. First of all, she had been willing to give all she had to the prophet. Secondly, she was willing to believe the words of the prophet when he said, "There will be more food." Her faith had been tested. It had also been made stronger because of the testing.

PART FOUR: THE widow and death

After these things had happened, the widow's faith was tested again. This time her son became very ill. He was so ill that he died. The widow's faith was not yet strong enough to bear up under this trouble. She began to say very bitter words to the prophet. (Read her words in 1 King 17:18).

Elijah commanded the woman, "Give me your son." He took the body of the boy from the mother. Then he went alone with the body to another room. There he prayed to God. Elijah covered the boy's body with his own body three times. "He cried to the Lord, 'O Lord my God, let this child's soul come into him again." (1 Kings 17:21b). God heard Elijah's prayer. God gave life to the boy again. Elijah returned the boy to his mother. He said, "See, your son lives." 1 King 17:23b.

Another miracle had happened in the home of the widow. The prophet had shown the power of God to heal and to raise a person from the dead. With greater faith, the woman

opened for them to go to Burma. There they faced many difficulties. Buddhism was the national religion of Burma. The Government forbade anyone to forsake his religion and turn to Christianity. Also, the Burmese language was a great problem. At that time there were no language books or dictionaries. Ann learned to speak the language more rapidly than her husband. Adoniram acquired a more detailed knowledge of it. It was seven years before they baptized the first convert. Often there was ill health and poor medical facilities. Their first child died soon after he was born. In spite of these things, Ann continued bravely beside her husband so that the people of Burma might know of Jesus and salvation.

PART FIVE: The prison experience

When the Burmese went to war with England Adoniram was arrested as a spy. Although he was an American, the fact that he spoke English caused the people to suspect him. He was put into prison without trial. Ann feared that any day he might be executed. He could never have lived the eighteen months without the help of Ann. She would prepare food for him. Then she would pay money to the guards to allow Adoniram to have a bit of the food. It would be impossible to describe the suffering of that year and a half.

Finally the Burmese realised that the war was lost. They needed someone to interpret for them as they made peace with the British. They took Adoniram from prison. He willingly helped them. He bore scars for the remainder of his life from the suffering while in prison.

LEADER: Much was accomplished for Jesus through the ministry of Ann and Adomiram in Burma. Apart from translating the Bible into the language of the Burmese people, they won some of the people to Jesus. They helped them to understand well the ways of the Christian

PART TWO: A dedication to serve

When Ann completed her work at school she became a teacher. The students and people of the community thought very highly of her. She attended church regularly and prayed that she might know God's will for her life. One day when she was twenty years old she was reading the life of a great missionary. She understood in a new way the need to tell the story of Jesus to those who had never heard. In prayer she promised God that she would give herself completely to him. She would go wherever he wanted her to go. She would do whatever God wanted her to do. Now she was ready to listen to God's will for her life.

PART THREE: A call to serve

Shortly after this, a group of ministers held a meeting in the church which Ann attended. A young man named Adoniram Judson spoke to the ministers. He was urging them to support foreign missionaries in order that the gospel might be heard in some foreign countries. Ann was present at the meeting. Later she helped to serve food to the ministers. She and Adoniram began to love each other very much.

Adoniram had planned to go to another country as a missionary. Would she marry him and serve God in India? Adoniram asked Ann that question. She agreed. Just a short time before, she had promised God that she would serve him anywhere. Now his will for her life was clearly seen. Two weeks after they were married they left America on their journey to India.

PART FOUR: Beginning work in Burma

Just after Ann and Adoniram arrived in India, they were told that they could not remain in that country. At last the way was

said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth." 1 Kings 17:24.

LEADER: This widow from Zarephath had lost all hope of life when Elijah met her. Then Elijah spoke the words of God to her. It was a test of her faith. However, she believed the words of God. She took care of Elijah. In doing this her needs were supplied. Even in the death of her only son, God was able to take care of her needs.

Today we must trust God completely. We must serve him in faith as this widow did long ago. God is able to supply our needs today. No, he does not give us everything we want. Our memory verse for today tells us that God is able to supply our <u>needs</u> --- not our <u>wants</u>.

Let us ask God that he might help us to serve him with a greater faith.

CHAPTER 4

THE WOMAN FROM SHUNEM

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Kings 4:8-10

MEMORY VERSE: *...with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26*

PRAYER:

LEADER: Today we shall study about another woman who served God. Again, we do not know her name. The Bible calls her "a great woman." It also calls her the "Shunammite" or a person from Shunem.

Perhaps the fact that she was called "a great woman" in the Bible means that she was a person of wealth. Perhaps it means that she had great influence with other people. As we study about this woman we shall see that she was great in other ways. She was great in wisdom and love for the work of God. She was great in her faith in God. She was great in her silence in the face of death.

PART ONE: Her love for the work of God

The woman from Shunem lived near a road that led from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Often the prophet Elisha passed that way. One day this woman shared bread with Elisha. Thereafter, when he passed that way, he stopped to eat bread. (Read 2 Kings 4:8).

Finally the woman said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy

CHAPTER 10

ANN JUDSON

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 118:1, 5-6, 14

MEMORY VERSE: *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Psalm 23:1*

PRAYER:

LEADER: We have been studying about women of the Bible who served God. Thousands and thousands of other women have served God since the Bible was written. Today we are studying about one of these women. Her name is Ann Judson. She served God as a Christian wife and missionary in Burma.

PART ONE: Her childhood and conversion

Ann was born in America just two days before Christmas in 1789. She grew up as a happy, beautiful girl who enjoyed playing with her friends. At school she was very clever and did well in her lessons. Although her parents taught her the things which were right and wrong, Ann was not a Christian. She wanted to be saved. She tried very hard to be a Christian by obeying the commandments which she read in the Bible. But there was no peace in her heart. She grew more and more unhappy.

Then one day as she read the Bible she realised a great truth. She had been trying to earn her salvation by her good works. She also learned that salvation is a gift which God gives to those who trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The words which helped her so much are found in Romans 4:5. (Turn to this passage and read it.)

Aquila learned many things from Paul during his stay in their home. These things they were able to teach to Apollos in Ephesus.

Today it is a good thing when husband and wife serve God together. It is also good when our friends come to our home wanting to learn about God. We should use our homes as a place in which to witness to other people. Let us pray that God will use us and our homes in this way.

man of God, who is continually passing our way. Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that whenever he comes to us, he can go in there." (Read 2 Kings 4:9-10). So they built a room for Elisha onto their house.

This tells us of her concern for the comfort of Elisha. Elisha was God's prophet. This woman loved God and the work of God. She was wise enough to recognise Elisha as being a man of God.

PART TWO: Her faith in God

One day while Elisha was in this women's home, he sent his servant to call her. She came and stood before Elisha. Elisha said: "You have taken all this trouble for us; what is to be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?" (Read 2 Kings 4:13). She replied that she was seeking no favour.

Then Elisha talked with Gehazi, his servant, about this thing. Gehazi reminded the prophet that this woman did not have a son. He also said the husband of the woman was getting old.

Elisha called her again. She came and stood before him. Elisha said, "At this season, when the time comes round, you shall embrace a son." 2 Kings 4:16. At first it was a difficult thing to believe. However, time passed and she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had said.

Many years passed, perhaps ten or twelve years. The Bible gives no record of what happened during those years. It does tell us that one day the boy went to the field with his father.

It was the harvest season. It was hot and very dry. The child had not been long in the heat when he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" 2 Kings 4:19. The father said to another person who was helping with the work, "Carry him to his mother." 2 Kings 4:19. The mother held the boy in her arms until noon. Then he died. Even though her only son had died, she still had faith in God.

PART THREE: Her silence in the face of death

Quickly the woman carried her son to the room of the prophet. She placed the body of her son upon the bed and left. There was not a word of complaining. She did not wail loudly or cry. She only sent word to her husband saying: "Send me one of the servants and one of the asses, that I may quickly go to the man of God, and come back again." 2 Kings 4:22. She did not even complain to her husband.

Quickly she and the servant prepared for the journey. Together they journeyed toward Mount Carme. As they came near, Elisha saw them. He sent Gehazi to ask her, "Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband? Is it well with the child?" 2 Kings 4:26. She only answered. "It is well." She was silent about the death of her child.

She ran to the prophet and fell down at his feet. Elisha knew that the woman was troubled in her heart. Soon he understood the seriousness of the matter. He said to Gehazi, "Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. ..... and lay my staff upon the face of the child." 2 Kings 4:29. Then Elisha arose and followed the Shunammite woman.

When they arrived at her home, the child was still dead. Elisha, alone went into the room where the body of the boy lay. He shut the door. There he prayed to God. Through the power of God, life was restored to the body of the child. (Read about this in

PART THREE: PRISCILLA in Ephesus

Upon arriving in Ephesus, Paul went to the synagogue and talked with the Jews. (See Acts 18:19). At once they asked Paul to remain a longer time with them. He was not able to do so. He said, "But I will return to you if God wills." Acts 18:21b. When he left Ephesus, Paul left Priscilla and Aguila behind. They became the leaders in the church at Ephesus. When Paul returned to Ephesus at a later time, he found a strong congregation there.

It was in Ephesus that Priscilla did one of her greatest services for God. She and her husband met a man named Apollos. Apollos was a well educated man from Alexandria, Egypt. This man knew well the Old Testament. He also knew the teachings of John the Baptist concerning Jesus. He did not know about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

PART FOUR: PRISCILLA - Helped to teach Apollos

Apollos began to teach and preach in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard his teaching, they knew that he did not know all things concerning Jesus. So "they took him and expounded to him the way of God more accurately." Acts 18:26b. What Apollos had known was correct. He just had not known enough about the life of Jesus.

The best teaching Apollos ever received was given to him in the home of Priscilla and Aquila. Among the greatest services that Priscilla and Aquila ever did for God was in teaching Apollos. Priscilla wanted him to be one who knew well the entire Gospel.

LEADER: We have learned that Priscilla and her husband served God together. Their home was a place where people could go and learn more about the way of Christ. Priscilla and

the teachings of God that the husband is the head of the wife.

Her home was a meeting place for people who wanted to know more about the Christian faith. She and Aquila lived during a time when life was hard for the Christian people. Christians of that day faced great persecution. Some were even killed because of their faith in God. Priscilla was willing to make many sacrifices in the spreading of the Gospel. She was not afraid in the face of these dangers.

What a challenge to Christian people today. We are not faced with persecutions and perhaps death when we tell others about the way of salvation in Jesus Christ. Many people are just afraid to speak for Christ to their friends.

PART TWO: PRISCILLA in Corinth

Priscilla and her husband Aquila had been living in the city of Rome. Happenings in the city made it necessary for all Jews to leave Rome. (See Acts 18:2). On leaving Rome, Priscilla and Aquila went to the city of Corinth. It was in this city that Paul met these two people.

Paul was the very first missionary. He travelled much and visited many places. While he was travelling on his second missionary journey, he came to Corinth. He, too, had learned the work of making tents. Therefore, when he met Priscilla and her husband, he remained with them. He lived in their home for a year and six months. Acts 18:11. We are told that Paul taught the word of God among the people there. Priscilla and Aquila learned many things about Jesus during Paul's stay with them.

When Paul left Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila went with them. They stopped at the town of Ephesus.

2 Kings 4:32-36. Tell this in your own words. Elisha called the mother of the child. He said, "Take up your son." 2 Kings 4:36. He was living again.

We read these words in 2 Kings 4:37 "She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took up her son and went out." We can believe that she gave thanks unto God in her heart.

PART FOUR: She obeyed the words of the prophet

Time passed and a famine was spreading toward the country of Shunem. Elisha spoke to the woman. He told her to take her son and go to another country. He said the famine would last for seven years. She obeyed the prophet.

At the end of the seven years, the woman returned to the country of Shunem. She went before the king to ask that her land be given back to her. The King had asked Gehazi to tell him about the great things Elisha had done. Gehazi was telling the king about the Shunammite woman. He was telling the king how Elisha had raised her son from the dead at the very time the woman came to ask for her home and her land. Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, here is the woman, and here is her son whom Elisha restored to life." 2 Kings 8:5b. The king gave orders that her house and land should be returned to her. He said, "Restore all that was hers, together with all the produce of the fields from the day that she left the land until now." 2 Kings 8:6b. Surely she must have been thankful to God in her heart. God had taken care of her and the child during the seven years of famine. Upon her return home, all things belonging to her were returned to her.

LEADER: Today we have studied about a woman who was called "great." Her greatness was found in the way in which she faced trials.

She had great faith through many trials. She served God with this faith.

Her greatness was also seen in the way she provided for Elisha. Her greatness was seen in the way she faced death.

How "great" are we today? Do we have a strong faith in God? Do we love the work of God? How do we act when we learn of the death of a friend or one whom we love?

Let us ask God to help us in these things. Alone it is impossible for us to face the troubles of life. With God all things are possible. Alone it is impossible to serve God. With God we can serve him in many ways.

CHAPTER 9

PRISCILLA

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 18:24-28

MEMORY VERSE: *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*
2 Timothy 2:15

PRAYER:

LEADER: Priscilla was one of the most helpful women in the New Testament church. Her husband's name was Aquila. They worked together in their service for God. Today we shall learn some ways in which they served God during the beginning years of the church.

PART ONE: PRISCILLA - Her character

Priscilla and her husband did the work of making tents. They worked together in their home. Priscilla also took care of the needs of those in her household. Even though she did these works, she found time to learn well about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. She did not have much education from schools and universities. Yet she knew many things of the Christian faith. She knew them with her head and her heart.

As we read about Priscilla in the New Testament we find many good things about her character. She did not push herself forward. She did not make other people feel that she was greater than they were. She was true to

together. What a wonderful testimony to those who lived around her. Today, are our homes a good testimony for Christ and his love to all people?

LEADER: Again we have learned how we can serve God in a better way. It is important that we show to our children the love we have for God. In what other way are they able to truly learn? If we only speak with our mouths the children will know that we do not love God above all else.

Because we are Christians, our homes should be a witness to our neighbours. Again it is better that we show by our lives that we are serving God.

Let us ask God to give strength and wisdom as we serve him in our homes. Ask him to show us how our homes can be used for him.

CHAPTER 5

ELIZABETH

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 1:5-7

MEMORY VERSE: *And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.*
Luke 1:14

PRAYER:

LEADER: Today we are beginning a study concerning some women of the New Testament who served God. One of the first of these women is Elizabeth. Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist. She was also the first person to greet Mary as the mother of Jesus.

PART ONE: ELIZABETH - Her life

Elizabeth was a woman who loved God. She was married to Zechariah. Zechariah was a priest and served in the Temple. In Luke 1:6 we read about Elizabeth and Zechariah: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

Elizabeth and Zechariah were both old people. Perhaps they had been married for many years. They had no children. In those days every Jewish wife longed for children in the home. They were not really respected by the other women in the village until they gave birth to a child. However, the lack of children in the home did not cause Elizabeth and Zechariah to doubt God. They still had faith in God. They still worshipped him and served him.

PART TWO: The word of God to Zechariah

One day Zechariah was working for God in the Temple. An angel of the Lord appeared to him. When Zechariah saw the angel he was troubled in his heart.

The angel said, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John." Luke 1:13. Zechariah was very surprised. It was a difficult thing to believe. He asked the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." Luke 1:18.

The angel assured Zechariah that he was speaking the word of God. He had been sent by God to give this message to Zechariah. As a sign, the angel said, "And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." Luke 1:20.

We are not told what Elizabeth did when her husband told her the message. However, we can imagine that she was very happy. At last she was to have a child. We can imagine that she was very thankful to God for this answer to her prayers.

PART THREE: ELIZABETH and Mary

When Elizabeth was in the sixth month of waiting for the child to be born, the angel Gabriel visited another person. This time he went to Mary. He told her that she was to be the mother of Jesus. Then he told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a child. Read Luke 1:36. Mary arose and journeyed to the home of Elizabeth. Upon arriving there, Mary greeted Elizabeth. At once Elizabeth knew that Mary was to be the mother of Jesus. (Read Luke 1:43).

Peter had been in prison because of his faith in Christ. The king had planned to have Peter killed. However, an angel of the Lord brought Peter out of prison. It was a miracle. When Peter realised that he had been delivered from the hand of the king, he went to Mary's house.

The Christian people in Jerusalem had been very concerned about Peter. Many people had gathered in Mary's house. They were praying for Peter. Perhaps they had gathered there many times before this, we do not know. We can suppose that her home was a regular place of meetings such as this one. Only a brave person would allow their house to be used for prayer during those days. It was dangerous to be known as a Christian.

As Christians today, our homes should be a place where other Christians can meet for prayer and Bible study.

PART FOUR: Things we learn from our lesson today

The first Mary about whom we have studied was remembered as "the mother of James and Joses." Surely she taught her sons concerning the things of God. These days it is very important that we teach our children about the things of God.

She loved Jesus above all. We must put Christ first in our lives, too. Jesus has said that if we love anything more than we love him, we are not worthy of him. Matthew 10:37-39.

The second Mary, about whom we have studied, is remembered as the mother of John Mark. Today we know her son better by the name "Mark." He was the writer of the Gospel of Mark.

She served God in her home. Christian people met there for prayer and fellowship

Testament tells us about her during the end of Jesus' life here on earth.

She was present at the crucifixion of Jesus. She, together with other people, had followed Jesus from Galilee. Mary helped to take care of the needs of Jesus during this time. (Read Matthew 27:55-56).

As the body of Jesus was removed from the cross, Mary was there. She followed Joseph of Arimathaea to the tomb. She watched as the body was placed inside the tomb. After the tomb was closed, everyone left except Mary - the mother of James and Joses - and Mary Magdalene. These two did not want to leave the tomb.

We can only imagine the sadness which filled Mary's heart between the crucifixion and resurrection. Perhaps many people asked each other, "Is it finished? What will happen now?"

This Mary was among the women who went to visit the tomb of Jesus. They went "toward the dawn of the first day of the week," Matthew 28:1. In our lesson last week we studied about the events of the resurrection. How happy Mary was upon knowing that Jesus was not dead. "He is risen from the dead." She, too, had good news to tell to others.

PART THREE: MARY - Mother of John Mark

The other Mary about whom we shall study is Mary the mother of John Mark. We find her name in only one verse of the Bible. (Read Acts 12:12). Because of this verse, Mary has become known to us as one of the great women of the New Testament. In this one verse we find these words, "Many were gathered together praying." What a great thing to say about a person's home. This event took place perhaps ten or twelve years after Jesus return to Heaven.

Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months. We are not told in the Bible about the things they did during this time. We can only imagine that they talked about many things. They must have been very happy as they planned for the birth of their children.

At the end of the three months Mary returned to her home. Soon thereafter, Elizabeth gave birth to a son.

PART FOUR: ELIZABETH and her son

During those days a child was named on the eighth day after his birth. Friends and relatives came to visit Elizabeth on the eighth day after the birth of her son. (Read Luke 1:59). Some of the people named the baby "Zechariah," after the name of his father. Elizabeth answered, "No, he must be called John." The relatives still did not understand. Then they asked Zechariah about the name of the baby. From the time when the angel spoke to Zechariah until this time, Zechariah had not spoken a word.

Zechariah made the motions showing them that he wanted to write something. Then he wrote saying, "His name is John." (Luke 1:63). Immediately his mouth was opened and he could speak again. He gave praise to God.

The Bible does not tell us about John's life as a little boy. We only read, "And the child grew and became strong in spirit....." Luke 1:80. We can imagine that Elizabeth taught him the things of God. She taught him to have a great faith in God.

John the Baptist was the person who went before Jesus. He told the people about the coming of Jesus. He prepared the way for Jesus. The work of John the Baptist was a great work.

LEADER: Perhaps Elizabeth served God in many ways. Let us remember two ways in which she served God. She served God in her home. She had a strong faith in God. I am sure that all the people who came to her home could witness her faith in God.

Then Elizabeth served God as the mother of John the Baptist. Surely she taught him about God. She helped to train John for the work of God.

In what better way can we serve God today? As Christians, our homes should be witnesses for God. We should also seek to train our children in the ways of God. We should help them be prepared to serve God in their families, in their churches, and in their communities.

Let us ask God to help us serve him in these ways.

CHAPTER 8

TWO WOMEN NAMED MARY

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 27:54-56

MEMORY VERSE: *Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, ...*
Matthew 28:7a

PRAYER:

LEADER: The name "Mary" is used more often than any other woman's name in the New Testament. There are six different women in the New Testament who were named "Mary." In the life of each of the women we see love and faithfulness to God. Today we shall study about two of these women. The first one will be Mary the mother of James and Joses. The other one will be Mary the mother of John Mark.

PART ONE: Mary - Mother of James and Joses

The first Mary about whom we shall study is identified as the mother of James and Joses. She is mentioned in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the Gospel of John she is called "the wife of Cleophas." Her son James was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. It has been said that James preached in Palestine and Egypt. Both of these sons of Mary helped to begin the early church. Surely this woman loved God above all else. Surely she taught her children about this love.

PART TWO: The ways in which she served Jesus

We do not read about this Mary in the early part of the ministry of Jesus. The New

Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him." Mark 16:6.

Then the angel told the women that they should go and tell the disciples about the resurrection. What wonderful news Salome had to tell other people. What wonderful news we have to tell people today.

LEADER: Salome will always be remembered as the mother of James and John. These two men were truly great servants of God. Salome served God, too, in her home. She served God as she taught James and John the things of God.

Later in her life, she became one of the faithful followers of Jesus. She served Jesus in many ways as he taught and preached. When Jesus was crucified many of the disciples fled. But not Salome. She even stood by the cross as Jesus died. She was not ashamed or afraid. Salome was one of the first people to learn of Jesus' resurrection.

She had learned well the lesson in greatness taught by Jesus. May we, today, learn this same lesson. Let us ask God to help each of us that we might become true servants of his.

CHAPTER 6

ANNA

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Luke 2:36-38

MEMORY VERSE: *...be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.*
1 Corinthians 15:58

PRAYER:

LEADER: We read about Anna in only three verses from Luke, chapter 2. However, we will be able to learn some lessons from the life of this woman who served God long ago. She was a woman of great faith. Let us listen carefully to the lesson today. Let us learn well the lessons from the life of Anna.

PART ONE: ANNA The days in which she lived

For many hundreds of years, people had been waiting for the coming of the Messiah. The promise of the coming Saviour had been made to Adam and Eve. When they sinned in the Garden of Eden, God gave the promise of a Saviour. (Read Genesis 3:15). Throughout the Old Testament we find this promise repeated to the children of Israel. Many years had passed. The people had grown tired of hoping for the birth of the promised Saviour. Anna lived during this time.

She was a prophetess. We remember that a prophetess was a woman who spoke the words

of God to the people. Luke tells us in chapter 2, verse 37 that Anna, "She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day." She loved God above all things.

Also Anna was an old woman. She had been married for only seven years. Then her husband died. She had never married again. The Bible does not tell us about their children. Therefore we can suppose that she had no children.

PART TWO: ANNA - Her hope

Many of the people of Anna's time had stopped looking for the coming of the promised Saviour. There was much sin in all the land. However, Anna and a group of people continued to look for the Saviour to come. Like all people in the past, they did not know when the promise would be fulfilled. The important thing was that they had not lost their hope.

Today as Christians we are looking toward the second coming of Christ. There are many people around us who are not Christians. Some of these people are laughing at the faith and hope of the Christian.

We also see much sin everywhere. Those people are not thinking about the second coming of Christ. They are not thinking about the life after the death of this body. They are only thinking of the pleasures of this world. These things must not cause the Christian to lose their hope. We must continue to be steadfast in the things of God. The promise of the second coming of Christ will be fulfilled. As it was with Anna long ago, we of today do not know the time that this promise will come to pass. We must be prepared.

and service to others. Jesus tells us, "But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave." Matthew 20:26-27.

PART THREE: SALOME - At the crucifixion of Jesus

Again Salome is only called the "mother of Zebedee's children." She and others of the women had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, "ministering to him." Read Matthew 27:55. In Jerusalem Jesus had suffered many things. He had been nailed to the cross. He himself had done nothing wrong. He was dying for the sins of all people. The fact that Salome was among those at the cross tells us that she was faithful in following Jesus. Many other people who had heard his teaching turned against him. Not Salome. She remained a follower even in the face of death.

PART FOUR: SALOME - And the resurrection of Jesus.

After his death on the cross, the body of Jesus was placed in a tomb. A big stone was placed in front of the tomb. Soldiers guarded the tomb. This was done because Jesus had said he would rise again from the dead on the third day. The rulers wanted to be sure that his followers did not steal the body of Jesus and say that he had risen from the dead.

Early in the morning on the third day. Salome and two other women bought some sweet-smelling spices. They wanted to go and put the spices on the body of Jesus. As they walked along they began to talk. Someone asked, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" Mark 16:3.

Behold, when they arrived there the stone was already rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw someone. He was an angel of the Lord. He told the women, "You seek

told them about the promised Saviour. When Jesus was choosing his disciples he passed by the home of James and John. He called them that they should follow him. Matthew says, "Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him." Matthew 4:22. Their mother must have taught them well concerning God. They did not ask questions when Jesus called them.

Through the ages, Salome is remembered not as the wife of Zebedee, but as the mother of James and John.

PART TWO: SALOME - Her request

During the early part of his ministry Jesus chose twelve men. These men were called "disciples." James and John were two of these twelve men who were chosen by Jesus. Salome, like all mothers, wanted the very best of all things for her sons.

Most of the people had the idea that Jesus had come to establish a kingdom on earth. One day Salome came to Jesus with a request. Jesus asked her, "What do you want?" She answered, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." Matthew 20:21.

Jesus directed his answer to the sons themselves. He said, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" The sons answered, "We are able." Then Jesus answered the request of the mother. He said, "...but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." Matthew 20:23.

Perhaps Salome needed these words of rebuke in order that she might learn what true spiritual greatness really is. True spiritual greatness can only be had through sacrifice

PART THREE: ANNA - Her hope fulfilled

Jesus had been born and the promise was complete. When Jesus was forty (40) days old, Mary and Joseph went to the Temple in Jerusalem. They took the baby Jesus with them. This was according to the custom of the people of Israel. In the Temple there was an old man named Simeon. He, too, was looking for the coming of the Messiah. It had been revealed unto Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing Jesus.

When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple, Simeon took the baby in his arms. He said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke 2: 29-30.

At that very time when Simeon was speaking, Anna came into the Temple. She, too, knew that the promise of God had been fulfilled. She gave thanks to God for the birth of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. She had lived to see the Saviour.

PART FOUR: ANNA - told others about the "Good News."

There were those people in Jerusalem who were also looking for the coming of Jesus. Anna, the prophetess, had seen Jesus with her own eyes. She knew that he had been born. She knew that the promise had been fulfilled. Therefore, she was able to tell all the other people about the birth of Jesus. Perhaps she spoke to them one by one. Perhaps she spoke to them in groups as they came to the Temple. We know that she did speak to those whom she knew to be waiting for the coming of Jesus.

Today are we telling our friends about Jesus?

LEADER: Today as we have studied about Anna we have learned some lessons. First, we have seen that Anna did not lose her hope concerning the coming of Jesus. Many people had lost that hope. Not Anna, no. She knew well the words of God from the Old Testament. She had great faith in God.

When she knew that the promise of God had been fulfilled, she told others. When we know some good news today, we like to tell our friends. Isn't that right? What better news can we tell them than the news of Jesus Christ. We must tell others about the way of salvation in Christ.

Let us ask God to help us as we tell others about him.

CHAPTER 7

SALOME

OUR TIME WITH GOD:

SCRIPTURE READING: Mark 16:1-4

MEMORY VERSE: *And he (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."*

Mark 16:15

PRAYER:

LEADER: Today we are studying about a woman named Salome. Salome was the mother of James and John. When these two boys grew up, they became two of the disciples of Jesus. We shall see that Salome served Jesus in several ways. Perhaps her place of greatest service was in her home.

PART ONE: SALOME - The mother

In Matthew 20:20 and Matthew 27:56 the person about whom we are studying is called "the mother of Zebedee's children." She is not called Salome in these two places. In Mark 15:40 and 16:1 she is called by her name - Salome.

Salome was the wife of Zebedee. Their home was on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Zebedee was a fisherman. He had hired men who were helping him and his own sons. (See Mark 1:19-20). This is an indication that Zebedee was a man of some wealth.

It appears that Salome taught her sons concerning the things of God. She must have