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YT41S

THOSE WHO FOLLOWED CHRIST

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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CHAPTER ONE

ANDREW, A CARING BROTHER

Aim: I will learn to share Christ better with those around me.

Background Scripture: John 1:35-42; 6:8-9; 12:20-22

Verses in Today's Lesson: John 1:35-42

Memory Verse: "He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which means Christ)" (John 1:41).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Ruth came to of the Sunday School class bubbling with joy. She had accepted Christ as her Saviour. Her first thought was to share this with her school mate, Mercy.

"I am saved!" Ruth exclaimed on seeing Mercy. "I have invited Christ into my life."

Mercy was not a Christian, but she liked Ruth. They had shared a lot together. Mercy knew Ruth's weaknesses and waited to see her return to her old self. But that was not the case. Mercy observed Ruth's growing interest in Bible study. Ruth had previously been a very selfish girl, but that was not changing. When Mercy inquired about this change, Ruth attributed it to Christ in her life.

It was not long before Mercy also made the decision to accept Christ as her personal Saviour. She did it because of Ruth's witness.

Andrew was a man who constantly shared his faith in Jesus. Let us study about him.

Interpretation

John the Baptist preached repentance and baptized those who believed. One day Jesus came by, and John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" One of the men who heard John say this was Andrew. He and his friend followed Jesus and stayed with him the rest of that day. Read John 1:35-42.

Andrew went to share his faith with his brother, Simon as soon as he could. Many times it is easier to share with a stranger than with someone in your own home. Andrew knew, however, that Simon too had been expecting the Messiah to come, and so he went to his brother with the good news that the Messiah had come.

In two other incidents in the book of John we see Andrew bringing people to Christ. This was a habit in his life. What can you do to be like Andrew? What did he do that can help you to be a better witness?

The first thing we observe in that Andrew was a follower of Christ. He was a disciple. Andrew had had a personal experience with Jesus. We cannot share about Jesus if we do not know him. Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). Andrew had met the Messiah, and he wanted others to

know him. Do you know Jesus as your personal Saviour? If you do, you will be ready to share him.

Secondly, Andrew was convinced that Jesus could meet the needs of others. It was because of this task that he brought them to Jesus. He realized that Christ was the Son of God and able to meet all men's needs. Andrew had submitted to Christ, and Christ had met his deepest desires. Now he wanted others to experience the same. Are you convinced that Jesus is capable of meeting every need? If you are, then you will point people to Jesus.

Andrew knew he could not satisfy other people's wants and needs. He had a friend, however, who could meet and supply all the world's needs. Paul said, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Application For My Life

Are you a Christian and do you desire to share your faith with others, but you have not been successful? Do not be discouraged. God wants to help you.

1. Read the Bible regularly. Read about the life of Jesus in the four Gospels. Study how the disciples went out sharing as recorded in the book of Acts.

2. Pray to God regularly. Ask him for opportunities to share the gospel with others. Pray that he will give you a heart that seeks his glory alone.

When you share your faith, you need to be natural. Do not try to copy others. You are a unique person. Let others see Jesus shine through your life by our speech and behavior.

Remember that you are just a messenger. You are to take the good news to all people. Start with those close to you. They know you, and they will need to see the change in you. Also, the people who are close to you, like your own family, are the ones you want most to enjoy the new life in Christ.

Be humble. People will know immediately if you are proud and looking down on them. If they notice this, they will be more difficult to reach. Do not accuse people and give the impression that you are better than they are.

Lead people to the Saviour. People prefer to be led rather than pushed. Andrew learned to lead men to Christ. You can learn to do the same.

Do not be afraid. Many people do not share their faith for fear that they will be ridiculed. Jesus is with you each moment to supply the courage you need. Paul said, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). That can be your watchword too.

Things To Do

1. Write three names of non-believers you would like to share Jesus with.

2. Begin to pray for them daily asking God to give you the opportunities to witness to them.

3. Start by being friendly with them. Share daily interests with them.

4. As soon as the friendship level is established, share with them separately how you became a Christian and how that has affected your life.

5. Continue praying for them.

6. Share with them how they too can make the same decision you made in accepting Christ.

7. Rely on the Holy Spirit for results.

CHAPTER TWO

SIMON PETER, A BOLD WITNESS

Aim: I will learn that Jesus died for everyone.

Background Scripture: John 1:42; 6:66-69; Acts 10

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 10:9-22, 34-35

Memory Verse: "Simon Peter replied, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:16).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

There was a well known chief in the village who was also relatively rich. He had a large family, a large house and a large amount of property. Therefore he employed many servants.

The children in the village always came around wanting to play with his children, but the chief would not allow it. He did not want to mix with other people. His family always looked down on other people and their way of living. They did not like the way others dressed or the food they ate.

John, a son of the chief, did not like all the restrictions in his family, but he had to obey his father's rules. When he became mature enough to understand, he became a Christian. Soon he discovered that many of the people whom his family despised were really happier than his family. He began to understand that before God all people were the same, regardless of their background or possessions.

Interpretation

In today's lesson we will learn about Simon Peter's concern to take the gospel of Jesus to non-Jews. First, we need to learn a few things about the person, Simon Peter.

Simon, a Galilean, was a fisherman. He was very courageous, outspoken man. At times he was quick-tempered, impulsive and emotional. Jesus called him to leave his nets and become a fisher of men. Read Mark 1:16-17. On that day Jesus also gave him a new name, Peter, which means "rock." Today we know him as Simon Peter. Read John 1:42.

Peter was ready at that moment to change his life style. He decided to follow Jesus and be loyal to him.

Acts 10:9-20: After the miracle at Dorcas' house in Joppa, Simon Peter went to the house of Simon, the tanner, for a few days. During this time, while he was praying on the roof, he saw a vision. Peter was very hungry. He saw heaven open, and something like a sheet descended. It contained all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds. A voice told Peter to stand up, kill and eat, but Peter refused to do so. He was very conscious about the Jewish rules not to accept anything unclean. The sheet came down three times, but Peter still insisted that he could not eat unclean animals. Then the voice told Peter. "...What God has cleansed, you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).

While Peter was still thinking about the meaning of the vision the Holy Spirit told him to go down and meet some people. He did not hesitate or doubt. He went to meet them. Peter was told to go with them.

Acts 10:21-23: The next day, Peter, the three men and some believers from Joppa went to Caesarea to Cornelius' house where many people were waiting for them. Cornelius came to meet Peter at the door, fell at his feet and worshipped him. Peter objected saying, "I am just a man like you."

They went in the house where the other people were waiting. Peter preached the good news of Jesus Christ to them. Many people accepted the Lord, were baptized and received the Holy Spirit.

Application For My Life

In today's lesson, we have learned about Simon Peter, a Jew who was called to go and preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile. According to Jewish tradition, no Jews was supposed to go to a non-Jew to interact in any way. They were the chosen people of God, and so they thought the gospel was for them alone.

Remember that in Jesus' days the early followers were Jews. When he started to go to non-Jews, he was criticized severely. The hostility Jesus met came because he claimed to be Christ the Messiah and also because he received sinners from other groups of people who were not Jews. He was criticized because he was mixing with people who did not follow Jewish requirements. Some of those requirements were about the Sabbath, laws about foods, purification rites and fasting.

We know that God has concern for all his people, whether they are Jewish, African, European, Asian, American or another nationality. He cares about all our needs. Our greatest need is for salvation which he offered to everyone. He rejected the artificial distinctions which the Pharisees had made between the Jews and non-Jews, who were called Gentiles. They thought Gentiles were worse than they were.

The Jewish people were not happy when Peter went to preach the gospel in other parts of the world, like Caesarea, Antioch and Asia Minor. He was a Jew, but he was also a true servant of Jesus. The boundaries which he found most difficult to cross were not geographical. They were those artificial distinctions which separated tribes, nations and even members of the church.

Should we expect better treatment than Peter received? What about Jesus himself? Do we expect to be treated better than he was treated?

Jesus has shown in many of his teachings that he was sent by his Father to bring the gospel of love and salvation to all tribes and all nations. He gave us the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. Read those verses and see who we are told to reach in his name.

In the world today, we must accept all people of our communities, our nations, our world without discrimination. Read Galatians 3:28.

Things To Do

1. List the names of some people you know who are different from you in some way, whom you have never told about Jesus.

2. Choose one person from your list. Pray for that one every day this week. Also pray that God will open your heart and give you love for that person and courage to go and talk to him about Jesus.

3. Is there any group of people that you hate? Confess that sin to God and ask him to forgive you. Ask him to love those people through you. Try to make some friends from that group when you have an opportunity. Pray for them regularly.

CHAPTER THREE

JAMES, SON OF THUNDER

Aim: I will learn that Jesus can help me overcome my weakness so I can be useful to him.

Background Scripture: Mark 3:17; Luke 5:10; 6:14; 8:49-55; 9:28, 51-56; Acts 1:13; 12:2; Galatians 2:12

Verses in Today's Lesson: Luke 9:51-56

Memory Verse: "...Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Anger is a feeling caused by something which displeases us. It is a feeling we all experience at times. It is not always wrong to be angry. We must be careful, though, because we can do wrong as a result of anger.

What causes anger in our lives? There are many reasons why people get angry. Someone may get angry because he has been badly offended, or because he has been irritated or simply because of sheer resentment.

We live in a world where people express anger in different ways. People who are angry with each other fight because they cannot agree. Countries go to war because they cannot accept each other's ideas for peace. Families break up because members direct their anger toward one another.

Can someone with the weakness of getting unreasonably angry change? The Bible teaches that it is possible for someone to change this habit and actually put it under control and do good. To do so we must allow God to work in our lives the way he did with James, who is also known as the "Son of Thunder."

Interpretation

James was the son of Zebedee and Mary. He had a brother called John. Both of them were among the twelve followers of Christ. James and his brother were special followers of Christ who were often selected to be with him in special events. They are often referred to as having belonged to the "inner circle" of the followers of Christ.

Close as he was to Christ, James had a very serious problem. At times he had a stormy temper and uncontrolled anger. He could get impatient and fail to tolerate other people who were different from him.

In Luke 9:51-56 we read how James and his brother John displayed anger toward the Samaritans who refused to allow Jesus to enter their village. There had been great disagreement between Jews and Samaritans to the extent that the two groups did not associate with each other. James, himself a Jew, could not understand how the Samaritans would not allow Jesus, a great teacher and prophet, to come through their village.

James displayed his anger when he and his brother suggested that the Samaritans be destroyed by fire. (Read Luke 9:54). But Jesus would not allow such a thing to happen. Instead he rebuked James and his brother. Their anger was based on a very wrong belief and attitude. They had failed to see the purpose of Christ's coming. Christ had come for all people including the Samaritans. He had not come to destroy people but to save them. Jesus taught that James needed tolerance.

James had been convinced that only his belief and way of life were correct. But this led him to a wrong decision which could have only led to destruction. Jesus taught James the need to have tolerance toward those who differed with him. This brought a great change in the life of James. He became one of the most effective witnesses for Christ. He was one of those present at the Pentecost. (Acts 1:13) He was among the first to be persecuted. In fact he was the first among the twelve to die for the gospel. He was killed by King Herod Agrippa. (Acts 12:2)

Application For My Life

James had a problem that he was not aware of. When he became aware of it he really changed. He became one of the followers of Jesus whom we all remember.

Today we are living in a world where people have become very intolerant of others. Some people get angry with others because they belong to another tribe, race or religion. Some even get angry with others because their favorite football team lost a game. Some get angry because of resentment caused by some selfish motive. Whatever the reason, anger can bring about serious problems. It always wants revenge.

How can such a thing be changed in a person? It can be changed by allowing the attitude of Jesus to rule our lives. Jesus taught James that we all have the duty of tolerance toward those who make us angry. To think that only our beliefs and our ways of doing things are correct can lead into serious problems in our relationships. We must treat other people with love as Christ treated the Samaritans. We are never to allow anger to become a hindrance in our witnessing for Christ.

Things To Do

1. The next time you get angry with someone make sure you think it through before you act. Decide why you are angry. You could become angry because of your pride, resentment or even due to a legitimate reason.
2. Once you know you are angry do not keep that feeling in your heart. Ask God in prayer to forgive you for feeling that way.
3. After you have prayed you must actually take action and forgive the person who has offended you. If you do so in love you may win that person to Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

JOHN, THE DISCIPLE OF LOVE

Aim: I will learn about the love of Jesus because of the love I see in John.

Background Scripture: Matthew 4:21; Acts 3:1-11; 8:14; 12:2; Revelation 1:1, 4

Verses in Today's Lesson: Luke 5:10-11; 22:7-8; John 19:26-27; 20:1-9; 21:7; Acts 4:13

Memory Verse: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Galatians 5:22).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Love is a word often used today. Many people use this word wrongly because they associate love only with the act of receiving things from others. To be loved indeed, involves receiving but it also involves giving to and for the other person.

Esther was transferred from her small town school to a city school where her father was working. She was very scared because she did not know anyone there. She thought she would be very lonely. Sarah, one the girls in the new school, saw that Esther was lonely. She decided to be a friend to Esther. She bought her a cup of tea at the canteen since Esther had no money. She showed her around the compound and answered her questions. On their afternoon off, the two girls went shopping together.

Sarah and Esther became close friends in a short time. Then Esther had a birthday, and her grandmother sent her a small gift of money. Esther had never had money of her own, and she began to wonder what she would do with it. Then she remembered the necklace Sarah had admired in the shop, but she did not have enough money to buy it. Esther rushed into the shop and bought the necklace. She gave it to Sarah with a not explaining that she too wanted to give to her new friend.

Many people today think of love as only receiving from another person. Let us learn from John what love really is.

Interpretation

John did not have a lot of education, and he did not have a high position in his community. In Luke 5:10-11, we see that John was a fisherman. Fishing was his way of earning his living, but when Jesus called him, John left everything and followed him. Then he became a fisher of men. Read those verses. John responded to Jesus' love, and because of this response, we read much about him in the Bible.

Luke 22:7-8 teaches that John and Peter went to prepare the Passover meal for Jesus and his disciples. John was always ready to obey what Jesus told him to do. He did not complain about the work but went quickly to do it. Jesus expects obedience in love from those who follow him.

When Jesus was crucified, John was there. Jesus gave him a big responsibility when he told him to take care of Mary, the mother of Jesus. What did John do about that command? Read John 19:27. He took Mary to his own home and cared for her.

After the crucifixion, the women took the message to John and Peter that the body of Jesus was missing. The two men ran to the tomb, but John arrived there first. In his sorrow at Jesus' death, John did not forget how much he loved him.

In John 21, the disciples were fishing. Jesus appeared to them while standing on the beach. He spoke to them and told them where they should throw their nets in order to catch more fish. While they all listened to him, they failed to realize who he was, but shortly John recognized him and told Peter that the man they were speaking to was Jesus.

It was from that point that his hard work started. We read in Acts 4:13 that John and Peter were standing before the ruling council. They were being questioned because of their preaching and because of the miracles God did through them in healing the crippled man. The ruling council had authority to put them in jail for a long time, but that did not scare them. They stood for Jesus. They were told to stop preaching, but they refused to obey people instead of God. John loved Jesus so much that he would not disobey him.

John was the writer of several books of the Bible including the Gospel of John, the three epistles of John and the Revelation. The last of these were written while he was on the Isle of Patmos where he was left to die because of his faith.

The love John had received from Jesus made him also love and serve Jesus. John gave him first priority in his life.

Application To My Life

To love someone means more than just receiving from them. In a true love relationship there is receiving and giving. When John left his nets, he was giving up everything he had to follow Jesus. When we receive the love of Jesus, it should move us from our old ways to his new ways. We should be willing to be obedient and to have faith to do what he has called us to do.

Our love should make us willing to stand for him no matter what the cost may be. John and Peter were in danger of being put in jail for a long time, but that did not scare them. Our love should give us confidence to be bold for him.

To love as John loved calls us to be a caring people. Throughout the ministry of Jesus, we see him helping those with needs. He is our example of how we should care for others.

The love of Jesus that John had and that we can know today is great. No man has loved us like Jesus. Ask him to help you love him and love others in his name.

Things To Do

1. Think over the different areas of your life and see if Jesus is in control of all of them. Take a piece of paper, write on it: Because I love him, I will give him: . Below that write those areas you are going to give him to control. Some of the areas might be friendships, vocation, choice of a life partner, behavior and other. Pray that he will take control now.

2. Think about some of the unfortunate people you know. Write their names and choose two who might be encouraged if they received a letter from you. Write them and encourage them in the next week.

3. Write the names of two friends who are not saved. Pray that the Lord would give you boldness to tell them about him.

4. Pray that others will see the love of Jesus in you because of the way you love them.

CHAPTER FIVE

MATTHEW, A NEW PERSON

Aim: I will learn that I must help my friends to know Jesus.

Background Scripture: Luke 5:27-32

Verses in Today's Lesson: Luke 5:27-32

Memory Verse: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (John 1:12).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Since Joshua trusted Jesus as his personal Saviour, his friends criticized him and made fun of him. Joshua always fell out of place in school. When he was at home some of his neighbors would ask what it meant to trust in Jesus. But Joshua was afraid to tell them. He feared that they too would persecute him.

What kind of example should a Christian be in order to help other people to come to know Jesus? Perhaps we can learn something from Matthew in our lesson today. He was a man who did not hesitate to invite his friends to meet Jesus.

Interpretation

Read the verses in Luke 5:27-32. Why did Jesus choose Matthew to be one of his disciples? Matthew was a tax collector and a thief. In his job he collected taxes from the people for Rome, but he was also allowed to collect more than the amount due to keep that for himself. The people knew that the tax collector always collected much more for themselves, and so they became very rich. Although the people knew this, they could not do anything about it. The only thing they could do was to hate tax collectors, and they did that. Therefore Matthew was rich and very unhappy. He had no friends except the other tax collectors.

Jesus knew very well what Matthew was, even before he saw him that day. But as bad as Matthew was, Jesus wanted him to be his disciple. He saw what Matthew could become instead of what he was at the time.

Why did Matthew follow Jesus? Surely Matthew has heard of Jesus as a great Teacher. Perhaps he knew of the wonderful things Jesus had done. He must have believed, also, that Jesus had the power to forgive sins.

And so, when Jesus spoke to Matthew, the tax collector did not ask any questions. He did not stop to pick up the money he had gotten that day. He simply got up and followed Jesus.

Read verse 29 again. Why did Matthew make a great feast in his house? He was concerned about the other tax collectors who were his friends. He had worked with them, and he knew their habits. He knew that they too had sinned, and he wanted his colleagues to be forgiven also. He also knew that the only person who could forgive them was Jesus. By holding a feast, Matthew knew his friends would come, and they could meet Jesus there.

The Pharisees, however, were not happy with this. They began to complain to the disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" They thought of themselves as being good men, and they would not mix with outcasts.

It was Jesus who answered them, and he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" (Luke 5:31). He knew that the Pharisees and scribes thought they were holy, and so he could not help them in that state. He could, however, offer forgiveness to those who would admit their sin and receive forgiveness.

Application For My Life

Do you feel free when you are doing your work each day? God wants you to have a right relationship with him. That is why he gave his only Son, Jesus, to die for your sin.

Since Matthew was a tax collector he left that work and followed Jesus. As you exercise your love to God he will make changes in your daily life. He will not remember what you have been in past. He will make you become what he wants you to be. When you believe God, you will find that he never fails to keep his promises to you. God will help you as you depend on him. All who seek Jesus will find him, but every one must believe in him to be forgiven.

When Matthew followed Jesus his sins were forgiven, and he was happy. Do you want to be happy now? God will help you if you will believe that he is ready to forgive your sins.

Luke 11:10 says. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Will you accept him today? When you accept him he is ready to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Matthew became a good worker for Christ, and you can too. Will you then ask God to give you a new life of joy today?

Things To Do

1. Write some things that can make you feel unhappy. Do you know that Jesus has power over all those things?
2. Read those verses in Philippians 2:3-7 and Luke 5:27-32 and think about them in your quiet time with God.
3. Say the Memory Verse everyday as you begin your day.
4. Work with your other class members to prepare a short dramatization of a tax collector's behavior at his job. Then show the change that came to Matthew as he walked away from that job and followed Jesus. Show his concern for other people as he prepared a feast so his friends could meet Jesus. Perhaps your teacher will give you time to present this drama to the class.
5. Pray for the work of the Lord in your community. Ask God to call out people to do his work.
6. Ask God to help you understand this lesson and teach you from it.

CHAPTER SIX

PAUL, A CHANGED MAN

Aim: I will learn that God will change my desires and make them what He wants them to be.

Background Scripture: Galatians 1:13-17; Acts 9:1-19; 26:9-23

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 26:9-23

Memory Verse: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Joseph was a new believer and was beginning to learn what Christ taught and what was required of him. But Joseph was having a problem with his temper.

Andrew was an older believer, and he wanted to see Joseph grow. He explained to Joseph that he did not need to struggle to change. "Christ lives in you and will help you change," Andrew advised. "If you give him your temper, he will give you his love and patience."

Joseph was glad to hear those words. He started praying every morning, giving Christ full control of his life. It was not long before Joseph realized that he was getting less angry and irritated. He thanked God for hearing his prayer and for a friend like Andrew.

This change gave Joseph confidence to tell other people what Christ was doing in his life. Joseph was full of joy as he experienced God's work in his life.

Let us learn about Paul who also let God make great changes in his life.

Interpretation

Acts 26:9-12: Paul was a Jew who had been trained by the best teachers of the law. He worked as hard as he could to persecute Christians because he thought he was doing God a favor in doing this. He had been brought up to think that keeping the law was sufficient to please God. And he thought the Christians were not keeping the law.

Paul worked hard, but he was a frustrated man. He himself could not even keep all the law! He could not do enough to feel successful in his effort.

One day he was on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians there. He had the authority of the chief priest, but something happened.

Acts 26:13-18: Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and this encounter changed his life. Jesus wanted Paul to surrender his life into his hands. Paul would serve him, and he would be Paul's helper. Paul stopped trying to please God in his own power. He allowed Christ to direct his life. Then Paul was satisfied to live for Jesus and spread the gospel message.

Acts 26:19-23: With Jesus directing his life, Paul wanted to do the things that Jesus gave him to do. He used all of his energy then to declare to people

everywhere that Jesus was the one who Moses and the prophets said would come. He preached everywhere that people should repent of their sins and turn to God. Then they would perform deeds worthy of their repentance.

Because of his preaching Jesus, Paul was on trial for his life. He spoke boldly to King Agrippa explaining his actions since the day he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Paul learned that we cannot live the Christian life in our own way and our own strength. We cannot overcome former habits by trying, but Jesus can give us strength to do his will. As we study the Scriptures, Jesus will guide us. The Holy Spirit will supply the strength we need to live for Jesus.

You may be finding it a struggle to serve Christ. Could this be because of your desire to do things without Christ's help? The Christian life is a life of daily surrender to Jesus who lives within us.

Application For My Life

The reason Jesus came to dwell in your heart was so he could change you to be like him. He wants to change your thinking and your actions.

If you think you can handle this new life on your own, you are headed for failure. The new life is not your life, it is Christ's life in you. So, your part is to yield yourself to Jesus Christ.

Begin by praying to God asking him to be the Lord of your life. Paul said in Romans 12:1, "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." Give your whole life to Christ.

Next, be quick to obey the Lord as he directs you in your daily walk. John 14:21 says, "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." God wants you to be obedient to him. As you do this, he will lead you to newer truths.

Thirdly, be open to share with others what Christ teaches you. As you give to others, Jesus Christ will give you more to share. Paul told Timothy, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

As you do these things, you will experience changes in your life. Do not be amazed at what happens, but be thankful.

"For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Things To Do

1. Take a piece of paper and write areas in your life that you have not yielded to the Lord Jesus.
2. Talk to God about these areas, and yield them to him.
3. Trust the Lord to help you change.

4. Burn the paper.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DORCAS, FULL OF GOOD WORKS

Aim: I will learn to give myself and my possessions graciously.

Background Scripture: Acts 9:32-43; Matthew 6:1-4; Luke 3:11; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 9:36-43

Memory Verse: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Lois was an attractive, well-behaved, hard-working girl. She was also a good cook. Many afternoons when she got home, she would make something to take to school the next day. She would then share it with all of her classmates at break time.

Lois was not forced to give what she had brought, but she did it because she wanted to express her love for her friends. She was very popular in her class, not only for her kindness but also for her good conduct.

Interpretation

In any society there are people who are relatively wealthy and educated while others are poor. These differences are inevitable. However, we can learn to accept one another and help each other.

In today's story, Luke reveals to us a young woman called Dorcas who was a devoted disciple of Jesus. Dorcas, sometimes known as Tabitha, lived in a seaport town named Joppa, not far from Jerusalem. There were many needy people in that town. She was a good Christian, generous, and filled with love. (See verse 36.) The misery of widows and children touched her heart. So Dorcas decided to use her time and energy to make clothes for the needy ones.

What do we do when we see somebody in trouble? Do we laugh at him? Do we feel that it is his own problem? Dorcas did not just have pity and sympathy for those people. She decided to show them love by giving them something and praying for them.

Look at verse 37 to see what happened to Dorcas one day. She suddenly became very ill and died. Her friends and the apostles were very sad. The women showed their love for Dorcas even after her death. They washed her, dressed her and placed her in her upstairs room. The apostles sent two men to Peter so that he could come and pray for them. Peter came and prayed. Can you remember what happened to Dorcas? (Read verse 40-42.)

Why do you think Dorcas came back to life? Verse 42 tells us that many believed in the Lord because of this. Dorcas was also restored to continue her good works. We should never ask why God allows a good person to die, because he does not make mistakes. He has a plan for every life, and his plan is perfect. We must only trust him and praise his name.

Dorcas' friends were very sad when she had died. They did not want this to happen to her. They remembered her many kindnesses to them and showed many of the garments she had made for them.

Application For My Life

What can you do to help other people? Think about your own talents and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In which ways can you use them?

We must remember first that all we possess belongs to God, even our property, time, energy, will, talents, strength, personality and our own bodies.

In our story today we learned that Dorcas had the ability to sew. She expressed her love by using that ability. Lois, in our Introduction, spent her time and energy cooking. Both of these young women gave their services without reserve and with no thought of getting anything in return. They found joy because of their good deeds. Jesus said in Matthew 6:1-4 that we should never practice piety before men to be seen by them. We should do our good deeds without wanting others to see us. Read those verses now.

As young people we may not have many material possessions to share with others. However, we can still think of ways to make ourselves helpful to them. Read Luke 3:11 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. God likes for us to share with those who are in need.

It is not always easy for us to go out and begin helping people we do not know. However there are many people we do know who need our help. How can you help your brothers and sisters or your parents? What could you do that would make their lives easier and more pleasant?

In what way could you help someone in your Bible study group? Surely you can think of many ways to help in your church. There are always duties of cleaning and sweeping the church and grounds to make the church more beautiful. Could you help the Sunday School teachers in any way? In school, would you be willing to help another student with a lesson that you understood well but he did not? Think about the elderly people in the community. Do they need someone to cut wood for them, to cut grass around their house, to sweep the floor or wash the dishes? Let us decide to help other people, especially those who are not as fortunate as we are.

Things To Do

1. Name some people in your church who have done good work for someone. What did they do?
2. Identify one person whom you would like to help. In what way will you help that person? Set a date to begin.
3. There are many people who must stay in special hospitals or homes, like places for retarded children, physically handicapped people and sick people. Could you select one of them and offer yourself to help that one?
4. Pray that God will show you opportunities for being a helpful and caring person.

5. Write the things that you will do and the dates you will do them and keep in your Bible.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MARK, A FORGIVEN SERVANT

Aim: I will learn that God will forgive my sins and use me again in his service.

Background Scripture: Acts 12:12; 13:1-13; 15:36-41; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 12:12; 13:5, 13; 15:22-41; Colossians 4:10

Memory Verse: "Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

James told his parents that he was going back to church for choir practice one Sunday afternoon. He was allowed to go, but instead of going to church he went to the disco hall at the nearest town. It happened that his father had a meeting at church later that afternoon. The choir leader asked James' father why James had not come to choir practice. Another young boy interrupted by saying that he saw James going to town.

When he came back that evening his father told him that he was not allowed to go to the choir any more. For three weeks James did not attend the choir. He continued to ask forgiveness from his father, and finally he was allowed to return. He thanked his father and did not go to the disco hall again.

Interpretation

Acts 12:12: Here we learn about a disciple of the Lord named John Mark. After Peter was released from prison, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. There he found a group of people praying. John Mark and his mother had opened their home for a prayer meeting. They were willing to use their home for this purpose, which helps us understand that prayer was important in their lives.

Acts 13:5, 13: Barnabas and Saul took John Mark with them to help them when they left Antioch to preach in other places as the Holy Spirit led them. We do not know why, but we read in verse 13 that John Mark left them and returned to his home. Maybe he was tired, because the work was very hard. He was a young man, and he could have gotten homesick. Whatever the reason was, he was considered a deserter.

Acts 14:36-38: After Paul and Barnabas had spent some time teaching in Antioch, they felt led by the Holy Spirit to go to every city where they had preached and see the people. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but Paul felt they should not take one who had left them before. The two men disagreed sharply about this, and they separated from each other. Paul took Silas with him and Barnabas took Mark. Therefore, they were able to visit more places. This time, Mark proved to be faithful, and he helped in spreading the gospel.

Colossians 4:10: When Paul was writing to the Colossian people, he said if Mark came to them they should receive him. Mark had proved himself by this time, and

Paul urged the people to accept him. Then later when he wrote 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul asked that Timothy would bring Mark to him, "...for he is very useful in serving me."

Mark became so useful in the work of the Lord that he was the writer of the Gospel of Mark. His is the oldest account of the life of Christ, and many consider it to be the most reliable. The other Gospel writers may have used his work to guide them as they wrote.

Application For My Life

There are always temptations in our lives. We are tempted to do things which are wrong, and this is sin. We must acknowledge sin in our lives. We should not try to make excuses for sinning.

But when we sin we should not give up completely. We should ask God to forgive us, and he promised that he will forgive us. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

On the other hand we may have friends or relatives who have offended us. The way they spoke or acted to us caused some pain in our lives. We should be willing to forgive them. God forgives us, we expect to be forgiven by others and therefore we must be willing to forgive also. Read Matthew 6:14.

God gave us some people who are willing to give us second or third chances when we make mistakes. Our parents, teachers and friends are some of them. Our faithfulness after failure will encourage them to do the same to others.

There may be some who cannot trust us after we fail them. We should still love them. We should know that God can give us other times to prove our sincere repentance to them, as in the case of Paul and John Mark.

We should encourage other people who have failed in life because of sin or misunderstanding. Jesus loved us, not because of what we did, but because of his love.

Non-Christians find it hard to forgive others. It is not easy even for Christians to do so, but we should pray and ask God to help us. We can be the real "light of the world" if we can learn to forgive.

Things To Do

1. Think of times when you have been offended. How did you feel after that experience? You may still feel bitter to the person who did it to you. Are you willing to forgive him? Pray for him and forgive him now.

2. It may be also that you have offended many people because of sin. Parents, teachers, close friends and relatives are often offended by our sinful actions. Telling lies, misusing our freedom, pride, arrogance and many others are sins which we do to offend other people. God is willing to forgive you of any sin. Ask his forgiveness. Know that he has forgiven you, and be ready to listen to him.

3. Pray now. Ask God to make you a new creature.

CHAPTER NINE

BARNABAS, THE ENCOURAGER

Aim: I will learn to help and encourage others.

Background Scripture: Acts 4:32-37; 9; 11:19-26

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 4:32-37; 9:26-30; 11:19-26

Memory Verse: "When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose" (Acts 11:23).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

In Josiah's village there were two men who had just been released from prison. They had been arrested for fighting and had served their time. But the people in the village did not want to talk to them. It seemed that everyone was afraid the men were dangerous, and so they would not befriend them in any way.

Josiah saw how lonely the two men were. He started visiting them and talking to them. Later he went with them to the market place. At first people seemed to be afraid of Josiah too, but soon they realized that he was helping the men get started again. They were harmless men who had reformed, and they needed a friend. Josiah was willing to share with them and help them.

Barnabas was also a sharing man. He loved people, especially those who worked to spread the gospel. He encouraged people whenever he could. He had a keen sense of responsibility for other people.

Let us look at the life of Barnabas and compare our own love and concern for others.

Interpretation

Acts 4:32-37 introduces us to Barnabas. We see him as a very generous man who is willing to sell a field and give the money to the apostles so they could help the needy.

In Acts 9 we learn about the time when Saul met Jesus on the Damascus Road. Saul had been known as one who persecuted Christians, but after this he was a great Christian himself. He stayed in Damascus for some time, but later he went to Jerusalem and attempted to join the disciples there. They knew who he was, and they were very afraid of him. They did not believe Saul was now a disciple of Jesus.

Barnabas took Saul to the apostles and explained to them what had happened. He told them how Saul had met the Lord, and how boldly Saul had preached in the name of Jesus since that time. Because of this Saul was accepted by the apostles, and they worked together.

The next time we hear of Barnabas is in Acts 11:19-26. This was the time just after the persecution of Stephen. Many disciples were scattered to the surrounding cities. They taught the Word of God to the Jews only at first. But

some men on arriving at Antioch, spoke to the Greeks and preached the Lord Jesus to them. A great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. The church at Jerusalem heard this great news. They sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was happy on seeing what the Lord had done. He advised them to remain faithful to the Lord. He told them to show brotherly love to one another.

Barnabas knew that the believers needed someone to guide and lead them. He went on to look for Saul, God's servant. Together, they were in charge of God's work in Antioch. Barnabas and Saul met with the church to preach Christ to them. They taught these new believers and encouraged them in their new faith. It was in Antioch that the disciples were called Christians, for the first time.

Who was Barnabas? Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus, an apostle of Jesus Christ. His name meant "Son of encouragement." Barnabas was faithful and full of the Holy Spirit. He was committed to serving the Lord, Jesus Christ. He gave himself to doing as the Spirit directed him. He was a missionary to the early church.

Barnabas felt that he was responsible to care for the needy. He had the desire to share generously all he had. He believed in doing his best to others. He was wise and courageous because God's Spirit was upon him.

Application For My Life

Does Barnabas' life apply to your life today? Yes! Barnabas was a devoted disciple who committed himself to reaching out and preaching Christ to other people. He encouraged new believers to hold firm to their faith.

Christ has commissioned us to do the same. As Christians we are to make disciples and teach them about Christ. We are told to love one another just as Christ has loved us. This love will cause us to help and encourage other people.

God chooses you to serve him as soon as you become a Christian. He wants to do good through you. He does not only use pastors and missionaries, but all who believe in Jesus Christ. If you believe in Jesus Christ then God will use you to help the needy, feed the hungry, pray for the lost and to encourage a brother or sister who is weak in faith.

You can help by using your time, sharing your own experiences or by using the talents God has given you.

Christ calls everyone to serve and to be his witness. He has promised to be with us in all circumstances. The Holy Spirit, our teacher and counsellor, will give us the power to stand firm in proclaiming Jesus to the world. He will also show us ways of helping and encouraging others.

Are you willing to seek God's plan for your life? Jesus has promised to show us the way if we ask. This is the time to make that decision. God will use you the way you are if you give him a chance.

Things To Do

1. In what ways do you think God wants to use you as a young person? How can your life be an example to other people?
2. Have you been a faithful Christian in doing what God wants you to do?
3. List five ways you can encourage other people.

4. What can you do this week to be more like Barnabas? Memorize the Memory Verse for today. Say it every morning this week until you can say it perfectly.

CHAPTER TEN

AQUILA AND PRISCILLA, A GENEROUS FAMILY

Aim: I will let Christ have control over my home and use it as he leads me.

Background Scripture: Acts 18:2-3, 18-19, 24-26; 1 Corinthians 16:19

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 18:2-3, 18-19, 24-26; 1 Corinthians 16:19

Memory Verse: "Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:1-2).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Mary was a Christian who attended a secondary school about an hour away from her home. She had two brothers who loved and respected her. They often watched her and tried to do the things she did. Her parents were Christians who attended the Baptist church in town.

Mary's best friend at school was Elizabeth. Elizabeth came from another part of the country and did not believe in Christ. Mary wanted her friend to know Christ, and so she decided to invite Elizabeth to her home during the Easter holidays.

Elizabeth was surprised to see the way the family prayed before meals. They did not argue with each other like her family did. On Sunday she went with Mary's family to church and felt the warm welcome there. The witness of the Christian family and the friends at church caused Mary to think about her own life. She was so moved by all these things that she began asking Mary how she could become a Christian.

Interpretation

Paul met a couple named Aquila and Priscilla who had been expelled from Italy by Claudius, the Emperor. They invited Paul to stay with them because he was a tentmaker like they were. They all did their work together until Paul left them to go to Caesarea. Paul was moved by the love and hospitality of Aquila and Priscilla.

This couple was generous and served God with their possessions. They used their home as a regular meeting place for Christians. Acts 18:16 says they took Apollos to their home and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Who was Apollos? He was a Jew from Alexandria. Alexandria was a seaport in Egypt. This town was named after Alexander the great. Apollos had accurate knowledge of the story of Jesus. He was a great speaker and had a good understanding of the Old Testament. Apollos was eager to proclaim the truth he knew. He was instructed by Aquila and Priscilla, according to Acts 18:24-25.

In Acts 18:18-19, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus. Paul was invited to stay with this couple longer. He said he would return if God willed that he should. This account shows that God had made arrangements to use Aquila and Priscilla. This couple was not in Corinth by chance. Their expulsion from

Italy played a constructive role in the advancement of the gospel. Besides, their experience in life is an example of how God works. Their problems were used to provide an opportunity of speaking the gospel. Therefore, God will always cause his work to stand firm. The devil might discourage people like Aquila and Priscilla, but God always wins the battles against the devil. Therefore this couple is an example of those who suffer because of the gospel. Their expulsion from Italy did not change their cause. They even did manual work to support themselves. Their hard work resulted in success for the gospel.

Application For My Life

Aquila and Priscilla realized they had a number of responsibilities before God to fulfil. First they had good news to share with others. Secondly, they had their property with which to help the needy. Similarly a Christian home will always be open to friends. This openness proclaims that one belongs to Christ.

How can we use our homes to show others that we love them? Our homes should be opened for two purposes. First, to share material possessions and secondly to share spiritual truth. This is what Aquila and Priscilla did. They showed the love of Christ before they did anything. We see a good example of this in the way Apollos felt welcomed. This family considered guests not as a burden but as a garden where they could sow the Word of life.

We should take time to welcome people and share what we have with them. We must remember that what we have is not ours, but it is God's. He is the one who had given us everything.

When we welcome strangers we welcome God. "Truly, I say to you as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

Love is required as we relate to people, but it is also necessary to take time to express that love. Needs of people differ from one person to another. Often the way we treat people might be bad. We might pretend to welcome them. We might even share our possessions, but if we have no love we have failed as witnesses. Each of us should examine our reasons for any good deeds we do. Are they done out of love or because of duty? We should give because of love, for God is love.

We should help the needy without choosing certain ones. When we favor one before another, God is never pleased. The service we render becomes useless. The devil can cause what would have been pleasant to be unpleasant. Therefore it is good to examine whether or not our actions pleases God.

Before we can offer spiritual help to guests in our homes we need to invite Jesus Christ to live there. Is he your Lord and Saviour? He will come in if you invite him.

Mary, in our Introduction, invited Elizabeth to her home and shared the love of God with her. Because of that love she felt in that home, Elizabeth wanted to have that love in her own heart. People will want to imitate us when we show them our love.

Read your Memory Verse for today and learn to say it.

Things To Do

1. Pray for wisdom from God to help you understand his Word.

2. Do you think it is possible for you to live a life of having concern for others? Why or why not.

3. Ask God to help you concentrate on showing your love through words and deeds.

4. What can you learn from Apollos as a Christian? Did he have fear in proclaiming Christ? Where did he get his boldness?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TIMOTHY, A FAITHFUL HELPER

Aim: I will learn that I can grow to be a faithful helper.

Background Scripture: 1 and 2 Timothy

Verses in Today's Lesson: 1 Timothy 4:6-16

Memory Verse: "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Isaac and James were happy to be chosen best football players of their school's team. Isaac thought he had reached the highest point in playing football and that he did not have to practice any more. On the other hand, James kept on practicing.

In doing so, he improved his skills and learned more tactics. When the coach of the junior national team saw the two boys play, he was so impressed with James that he selected him for his team.

In everything a person does, there is room to improve. One does not sleep and wake up being better. Instead they work, they exercise, they follow some pattern of study and they get advice from others. In so doing, they grow.

Timothy followed the advice of Paul and became a faithful helper. Let us see the things that helped him and the thing that can help us in the Scriptures.

Interpretation

1 Timothy 4:1-5: Paul wrote about the false teaching that was going on in Ephesus. Because of this teaching, Paul advised Timothy to continue being a faithful helper without being attracted by the false teaching. Paul gave Timothy the qualities of a faithful helper in 1 Timothy 4:6-10. Then he reminded him of his personal duty as a helper in God's work. (See 1 Timothy 4:11-16.)

1 Timothy 4:6: Timothy is advised to continue giving instructions to the brethren in the midst of heresy. He also advised him to feed himself spiritually so that he could have something to give out. To him whom the Lord has shown the light, out of him the Lord expects service.

1 Timothy 4:7-8: Timothy is ordered to ignore anything that is godless, and instead he must strive for godliness. It is of value in the present life and in the future life.

1 Timothy 4:10: In this verse, Paul pointed out to Timothy the reason for striving hard as a helper in God's work. It is because of the hope in the living God who can meet all needs and save all who believe.

1 Timothy 4:11-16: As a helper in God's work, Timothy would teach others the things he had learned. He was to be an example in his speech, conduct, love, faith and purity so that he would not be despised by other people. He must also

remember his gifts and use them. By doing this, both he and his hearers would be saved.

Application For My Life

Everyone called by God is a helper in his work. It does not matter whether one is young or old, rich or poor, possessor of five talents or of one talent. All are helpers, and God wants us to be faithful.

What is a faithful helper?

1. He shares what he has learned. Christians have the joy of eternal life. They have forgiveness of their sin in Jesus Christ. They have found the truth and have peace in their hearts.. What they have experienced, they must be faithful to share.

2. He feeds his spiritual life. Feeding the body is necessary. It provides the nutrients for body building and for fighting diseases. It also provides energy that can be used in working. If the body is not fed, it will be weak. It cannot be of help to other people. The spiritual life is similar to this. We must feed it with the Word of God. As we do this it will be strengthened and built up so that one can have something to share.

3. He puts away what is not important and clings to that which is of value. The world we live in is full of many teachings. Many leaders and many forces would lead us astray. A faithful helper determines what is good for him and what is bad. He does not involve himself with the bad things, but he uses all his time and energy to accomplish the good things in life. Spiritual things are the good things of great value. They enrich the life of the person and lead him to victorious living.

4. His hope is in God. When one places his hope in God, he wants to serve God. God leads that person and provides the strength and wisdom for doing his work.

A faithful helper shares God's truth with other people. He sets an example in the way he lives. He considers his task as God-given and puts all his efforts into it for the sake of his own life and others.

Things To Do

1. Make a list of at least five things you can do in your church or community as a faithful helper in God's work.

2. Number these in the order that you will do them with God's help.

3. Can you think of some false teachings that you have heard recently? Choose your response to these things. Write them out and keep the list in your Bible.

4. How can daily Bible study help you continue being a faithful helper in God's work? Will you make a commitment to study your Bible every day and spend time in prayer to God?

CHAPTER TWELVE

STEPHEN, THE MARTYR

Aim: I will decide to stand for Christ.

Background Scripture: Acts 6, 7

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 6:1-10; 7:54-60

Memory Verse: "And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

Zipporah was a new Christian with two small children to support. Soon after she had started to tailoring school, she was asked to take a stand which was against her religious beliefs. When she refused, she was put out of the school. She made a great sacrifice because of her faith in God.

Other Christians in many different places have also been willing to stand for God. Many in some countries have been told to give up their faith in Jesus Christ or die. Many died. What made them do it?

The Bible tells of people who refused to stop believing in Jesus, even if it cost them their lives. Stephen was one of these. What made him willing to defend his faith?

Interpretation

Stephen, the Servant, Acts 6:1-7: Stephen is first mentioned in Acts 6:5. The first church in Jerusalem chose him and six other men to help the twelve apostles. Acts 6:1-4 explains why they needed help.

What kind of man was Stephen? Why did the church choose him? Because he was chosen to give out food to those who needed it, he had to be willing to be a servant. He had to be willing to work. Acts 6:3 says that he had to be a man of good reputation. Others respected him because he was honest, fair and dependable. He was full of wisdom. That means that he saw things the same way that God sees them. Acts 6:5 says that he was full of faith. He believed God. That verse also says that he was full of the Holy Spirit. God lived in him and controlled his thoughts, words and actions.

Stephen, the Defender of the Faith, Acts 6:8-10: Many people in Jerusalem were becoming Christians every day, even some of the Jewish priests. This made many religious Jews very angry. They argued with Stephen more than with anyone else. Acts 6:8 says that he was full of God's power which helped him to do great miracles. That angered these Jews very much even as Jesus' miracles had done.

These men argued with Stephen, but they could never win because he spoke by the power of the Holy Spirit. They were actually arguing with God. The secret of Stephen's power was the Holy Spirit living in him.

In Acts 7 Stephen preached a sermon to these men, using the Scripture to remind them of their history and how they had refused to listen to God before. The Holy Spirit helped him to remember all these Scriptures and to know how to use them.

Stephen the Martyr, Acts 7:54-60: When these Jews heard Stephen's sermon, they angrily dragged him outside and stoned him. Because he was full of the Spirit, he looked up and saw Jesus. He died in peace, forgiving his enemies.

How was Stephen able to defend his faith in Christ even to death? There are three reasons.

1. He had given his life completely to Jesus and believed his promises.
2. He had given control of his life to the Holy Spirit. That means he did what God wanted, not what he wanted or others wanted.
3. He was willing to sacrifice for the good of others. This made him a willing servant in the church and an effective witness to Paul in his death (Acts 7:58).

Application For My Life

We may not be stoned to death as in the case of Stephen, but Christianity does not promise that we are not going to be persecuted. It is a possibility in our Christian life. We sometimes face minor humiliation from non-believers. They can call us strange names because of our faith. Some will take advantages of our faith by telling us to do good things for them because we are Christians. That is suffering also.

But we should not forget the secret behind Stephen's victory. When he accepted Christ he gave his total commitment to the will of God. Even at the time of crisis in the church he was very dependable. Let us check our own lives. Can our church depend on us because of our character and behavior?

As Stephen gave himself for service, God gave him a bigger responsibility. From serving the food he was able to preach the gospel of Christ. Very often God gives us talents of different kinds. When we use them faithfully, he adds more. How are you using your talents. If you use your voice faithfully in singing later God might call you to be a preacher. If you are faithful with actions, God can call you for more higher responsibilities. How are you using your God given abilities?

Another important factor about Stephen was that he stood for truth. Jesus claimed that he was the truth. This claim was true then and is still true today. Then the Jews distorted this truth, Stephen did not care about their number, their status, their anger or their intellect. He spoke the truth only. The Jews did not like that. Can you stand for truth today? The Bible teaches that our lives should portray our faith. If Jesus is the truth we must stand for it and defend it.

Things To Do

1. Think about your Christian life, and see if you have been embarrassed, humiliated or mistreated because you were a Christian. What was your reaction?
2. Write what you are capable of doing for the church today.
3. Pray for that list this week.

4. Try this week to stand for the truth.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PHILIP SHARING CHRIST

Aim: I will learn to share Christ with those who do not know him.

Background Scripture: Acts 8; Luke 12:8-9

Verses in Today's Lesson: Acts 8:4-13, 26-40

Memory Verse: "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news of Jesus" (Acts 8:35).

A STUDY OF THE LESSON

Introduction

After high school, Joseph went searching for a job. He wrote many applications at different times hoping to get some responses. He was very happy when he was called to sit for interviews, but he was surprised that he always received a letter of regrets.

One day Joseph approached a personnel officer for a job. "What can I do for you, Young Man?" the officer asked. "I am searching for a job, Sir," Joseph replied. "Well, go and write your application and bring it back to me personally. Remember, an empty hand does not get a bite."

Joseph went away confused and wondering if he could share Christ in this situation. He had spent three years without a job, but was this the one he needed?

In this lesson we will learn the Christian's responsibility to share Christ with those who do not know him. We will also learn how Philip walked with God. He lived like Jesus, and he talked about him.

Interpretation

Philip was among the seven deacons chosen by the church in Jerusalem. Acts 8 tells us that great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, and the Christians were scattered throughout the region. Those who were scattered went about and proclaimed Christ to them. Many heard the good news about the kingdom of God and were baptized. Simon, the man who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the nation of Samaria, believed and was baptized. Read Acts 8:6-8. Samaria represents the world you are facing right now.

A minister is someone who holds a high rank in state or government. Acts 8:26 tells us that Philip rose and went toward the south to the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. An Ethiopian eunuch, a minister of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians in charge of all her treasure, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home in his chariot. Philip ran to him and heard him reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, the prophet. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch replied, "How can I unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him in his chariot. Read Acts 8:35. This is your Memory Verse for today. Learn it now. As they went along the road, they came to some water. The eunuch believed and was baptized. He went on his way rejoicing.

Baptism is a complete immersion in water. It symbolizes the death and resurrection of Christ. Acts 8:40 tells us that Philip was found at Azotus preaching the gospel and sharing the good news of Jesus in all towns. Wherever he was, he was sharing Christ.

Application For My Life

How can you share Christ with a world that is corrupt? Have you ever been ashamed to tell someone about Christ because you were afraid they would look down on you? You may even be afraid to tell the members of your family about Jesus. Maybe you think they will laugh at you or mock you.

The pleasures and things of this world hinder many young people from sharing their testimony with others. How many times have you failed to speak a word for Jesus? The Bible teaches us that Christ is for all the world. We cannot set boundaries for his Word. What, therefore, can prevent us from sharing him with those who do not know him?

It is only when we think more of ourselves than we do of Jesus that we fail to tell people about him. If our main purpose in life is to have people like us, we will do everything we can to reach that goal. If we want most to earn money, this will control all we say and do. If we love Jesus more than anything in the world, we will want to share him with other people.

One young man said that after high school he began to apply for jobs. On all applications he included the words, "I am a Christian, and I love the Lord Jesus." When asked why he did this he explained, "I have met Jesus personally, and he means a great deal in my life. I am excited and I want to tell people about him."

When we hear the good news of Jesus and believe his Word, we ask him to take control of our lives. Because of this we are baptized and we become one with him. Then we should be ready to share him with people who do not know him. We should be concerned for our family members and want them to have this salvation also. We should share him with our close friends, our fellow workers and people we do not even know. God will give us his Holy Spirit to help us share as Philip did.

You cannot share what you do not have. You must know Christ personally. He must be your Saviour and the Lord of your life. You must follow him faithfully and desire to share him with others. If you surrender to him, he will enable you to share as he leads you.

Things To Do

1. Choose three people you know are lost. Pray for each one by name each day this week.
2. Write on one page or two (at most) what the Lord Jesus has done for you. Make it in the form of your testimony. Practice saying it without the paper.
3. Share Christ with someone in your family or a close friend. Remember the testimony that you wrote, and tell that person about your experience.
4. Read your Bible every day and pray that God will help you to become a faithful witness.