

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 10: The Holy Spirit, the Indwelling

Unit 10 Big Question and Answer:

What Does the Holy Spirit Do In God's People?

He Changes Their Hearts to Be Like Jesus!

PFI ESV Songs 10, Tracks 3,4

Unit 10 Bible Verse: Ezekiel 36:26, ESV

"I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you."

PFI ESV Songs 10, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

The Holy Spirit Builds God's Church

Many people think that a church is a building, but it's not. Church is the name for all of God's people.

God's Church is built by the Holy Spirit, one person at a time. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of people, giving them the gift of faith as they hear God's Word, the Bible. The Holy Spirit helps them believe God's Word, turn away from their sins, and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

God has always planned for the Holy Spirit to bring people from everywhere in the whole world to be part of His people, the Church. The Bible tells us that the Church will be made up of people from every single people group and language in the world.

Every week, groups of God's people meet together to worship God in gatherings all over the world. This is what we call going to church. But in heaven, the whole Church--all of God's people, from everywhere and every time--will gather together to worship God forever. What a gathering that will be! The Bible tells us that it will be so many people that we won't even be able to count them.

We can be part of God's Church--God's people--too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Acts 9:31, NIV 1984

"[The church] was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Banana Leaf Carving.

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

1. Who made the Banana Leaf Carvings? Where was she from? Where did she go to live?
2. For whom did she make the Banana Leaf Carvings? Why did she travel there to make the carvings for them?

This story starts out around 1910 in England.

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out in Indiana, in the United States, in the 1950's.

Sweat was something most farmer's daughters got used to in Valpariso, Indiana. Farming was hard work! Marilyn glanced behind her tractor to see that the plow was working properly. Good. The sharp, metal plates were making deep furrows in the dark soil. They would plant seeds in these furrows which would grow into the corn and wheat her family grew for a living.

But while Marliyn's body was hard at work making furrows for corn and wheat, her mind was thinking about a completely different "crop" that Jesus urged His followers to help with. "The hearts of people are like soil to God," Jesus had taught. "God's Word is the seed. When people hear it, the Holy Spirit works in their hearts and grows those little seeds of truth into a crop of people who love and obey God—God's Church. Look around you. There are so many people who are eager to hear about God, like a crop of wheat is ready to be harvested. But there are so few people to tell others about Him, like farmers harvesting their corn and wheat. Ask God to send out more workers so that everyone will hear and all God's people be gathered together," He told them.

"There are so many people in far away places that have never heard about Jesus. Why don't I go and be one of those workers that Jesus said are needed?" Marilyn said to herself. "God is building His Church from people of every nation and language. I want tell others the Word of God so that the Holy Spirit will build God's Church among people who have not yet heard of Him," she decided. "I want to be a missionary."

Marilyn worked hard at school and took special classes to prepare her to work as a missionary. She learned how to make an alphabet and write down languages that had never been written down. The people she longed to tell

about Jesus wouldn't have a written-down language and they would need one, if they were to read the Bible. She would have to write it down for them and teach them to read it. If people could read the Bible, the Holy Spirit would use it to build God's Church, Marilyn knew.

Finally it was time for Marilyn to go. She said goodbye to her family in Indiana and flew thousands of miles away to Hauna Village on an island in the South Pacific Ocean called Papua New Guinea--on the other side of the world! Up the Sepik River Marilyn and her teammate paddled in their dug-out canoe until they came to Hauna Village.

Nothing could have been more different from Indiana than Papua New Guinea! Indiana had four seasons: summer, spring, winter and autumn. Papua New Guinea had two: dry season and rainy season. And I mean really rainy season, with more than 25 feet of rainfall! People in Indiana lived in houses with running water and electricity. In Papua New Guinea, they only had huts for houses and streams for running water. Indiana was farm country with cows, pigs and fields. Papua New Guinea was jungly rain forest, home to beautiful tropical birds and...lots of giant crocodiles, snakes and large, biting insects! People in Indiana went to school and knew how to read and write. In Hauna Village, no one even knew what a school was or that spoken words could be written down.

Why would Marilyn want to go to a place like this? Didn't Indiana sound much more comfortable? Yes, it did. But Marilyn wasn't going to Hauna Village to be comfortable. She was going there because there was no one to tell these people about Jesus.

Yes, oh, how the Sepik Iwam needed to hear! They worshiped the spirits of people in their family who had died long ago. They believed these spirits lived in everything—even in rocks and trees-- and had control over their lives. They depended upon men they called "witch doctors" to tell them how to keep the spirits happy so that they wouldn't harm them. The people lived in fear of these spirit. How wonderful it would be to bring them the truth of God's Word and free them to know the one, true God through Jesus! They needed to have the Bible in their own language. Then the Holy Spirit could work in their hearts, making them His people. This was part of God's plan and He had called Marilyn to be a part of it.

Marilyn and her teammate soon made friends with one of the men in the village, a man named Nokiyan. They

would point to anything they saw and Nokiyan would tell them their names in Sepik, his language. Then they would write down the sounds and add the words to their dictionary.

Slowly, Marilyn and her teammate began to learn the language. After six months of pointing to things and saying their names in Sepik, Nokiyan asked, "Every day you walk through the village, pointing and listening, what are you carving on that banana leaf with that thorn? (carving, banana leaf and thorn are their words for writing, paper and pen)"

"I'm carving your talk," Marilyn told him.

"My talk? You mean the words that are coming out of my mouth, you're carving on that banana leaf like the white man's talk? I thought only white man's talk could be written down?"

"No, Nokiyan, your talk can be written down, too. God created your talk," Marilyn explained.

Marilyn and her teammate began to write the Bible into the Sepik and read it first to Nokiyan. Like little seeds sprouting in the good soil, the Holy Spirit used the words of the Bible to grow faith in Jesus in Nokiyan's heart. God, through the Holy Spirit, was building His Church in Hauna Village, Papua New Guinea!

Soon, many in Hauna village became Christians. They built a school to teach everyone how to read and write. They wanted all to be able to read the Bible themselves. They built a little church building so that they could meet together and praise God. How happy Marilyn was to see how God was building His Church!

But there was much more work to do! Now the Sepik Iwam people knew about Jesus and had a Bible in their own language, but there were 100's of other tribes in Papua New Guinea. They needed someone to learn each of their languages and write down the Bible for them. They needed to hear about Jesus.

One day a canoe load of fifteen people from a faraway village came to Hauna Village for some of Marilyn's "white man's" medicine. They watched all two hundred of the villagers go to school to learn to read and write! They went to church and heard the people joyfully singing to God and the pastors teaching them about Jesus, in their own language!

"Marilyn, do you think you could come to our village and put our talk on the banana leaf so that we might know

about God, too?" the visitors asked. "Please will you come and teach us in our language about Jesus?"

But Marilyn sadly said, "I'm sorry, but I cannot come right now. I have to finish my work here first. But I will visit your village as soon as I can."

A few weeks later, Marilyn kept her promise. She, her teammate, and some of the villagers made the four-day canoe trip up the river to the man's village. Their friend greeted them excitedly. As they walked around, the little village of huts seemed much like other villages they had seen, except for a strange new building that stood in the very center.

"My friend," Marilyn asked the man, "what is that building there in the center of the village?"

He said, "Oh, that is God's house. That's our church building."

"Your church building? Who build it for you?"

"No one did. We built it ourselves."

"Did you find someone to come to tell you about Jesus in your language so that you can learn about Him?" Marilyn asked.

"No, there is no one," the man sadly said.

"Then what is that building for?" Marilyn wondered.

"We saw the little church building in your village and our people decided to build one, too," the man explained. "Now we're waiting for someone to come and tell us about God in our talk—in our language."

Even in that little village, seeds had been planted in the hearts of people. They were waiting for someone to teach them the Bible and tell them about Jesus. Waiting for the Holy Spirit to grow the tiny seeds of truth they had heard and make them into people who loved God--part of God's Church.

Has someone gone to that village yet, to put their talk on the banana leaf so that they might know God? I do not know. But one thing I do know is that God, through His Holy Spirit, is building His Church, from people from every tribe and language. In heaven when all God's people are gathered together, there will be people from every tribe and language standing before God's throne, even people from that little village that Marilyn visited. That is the unfailing plan of God.

Our Bible Truth is: The Holy Spirit Builds God's Church

Our Bible Verse is: Acts 9:31

"[The church] was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord."

But, what about you and me? Could there be a calling for us like there was for Marilyn Laszlo? Could God be calling us to help build His Church by telling others about Him: others who live next door to us or go to school with us; or even others like the people in that little village who built a church building and were waiting for someone to come and tell them about Jesus? If we are Christians—those who have turned from our sins and have trusted in Jesus as our own Savior--God does have a part for us to play in building His Church.

The Harvest of God's Church is not complete. He still calls for more workers! He wants us to tell about Him so that the Holy Spirit can work in their hearts and bring them to be part of God's Church, His people.

Let's praise this God who through His Holy Spirit is building His Church of people from every tribe and language. Let's ask Him to send out more of His people to help build His Church by spreading the good news about Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and to use even us to help build His Church, by telling others about Him.

<p align="center">SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE TRUTH HYMN</p>
<p>1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False: God always planned for the Holy Spirit to bring people from everywhere in the whole world to be part of His people. Answer: True.</p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. Who made the Banana Leaf Carvings? Where was she from? Where did she go to live? Answer: Marilyn Laszlo. She was from Indiana and she went to Papua New Guinea, on the other side of the world.</p> <p>b. For whom did she make the Banana Leaf Carvings? Why did she travel there to make the carvings for them? Answer: The Sepik Iwam people who spoke their language. Because she was part of God's plan to bring the good news of Jesus to this people group so they would be part of His Church, too.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Acts 9:31 "[The church] was ___; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it ___ in numbers, living in the ___ of the Lord." Answers: strengthened; grew; fear.</p>	<p>The Church's One Foundation <i>PFI ESV Songs 10, Track 25</i></p> <p>Verse 1 The Church's one foundation Is Jesus Christ her Lord; She is His new creation, By Spirit and the Word: From heav'n He came and sought her To be His holy bride, With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died. Words: Joseph H. Gilmore Music William B. Bradbury</p> <p>Church is the Bible word for all of God's people. Jesus Christ is the Church's foundation because He is the only one who could save His people. Without Him, no one could ever be forgiven their sins and come to know God. He bought all of God's people by paying for their sins with His own blood when He died on the cross. The Holy Spirit works in each of God's people, helping them turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior when they hear God's Word.. He gives them a new heart that knows and loves God and want to serve Him. One day the whole Church will be together with Jesus. The Church will be like His bride whom He loves and delights in forever. And how the Church will love Jesus! Like a bride loves her new husband, but far, far more!</p>
<p align="center">AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY</p>	<p align="center">BIBLE VERSE SONG</p>
<p><i>A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication</i></p> <p>A God, we praise You for being the Great Builder of the Church, Your people, from every tribe and nation, even tiny tribes in faraway places like Papua New Guinea.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times we are not like the people of the neighboring tribe who were so hungry to worship You and hear Your Word that they built a church building, even before someone came to tell them. Many times we are lazy and do not care to think about You or read Your Word, the Bible.</p> <p>T God, we thank You for the great work You chose to do through C.T. Studd. Thank You for the many other missionaries who have gone out after seeing his example.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we might know and love You. Keep strengthening Your people to go out and tell all the peoples of the world about Jesus that they might be saved.</p>	<p>The Church Was Strengthened <i>PFI ESV Songs 10, Track 27</i></p> <p>The church was strengthened, and encouraged, By the Holy Spirit, by the Holy Spirit, It grew in numbers, it grew in numbers, Living in the fear of, the fear of the Lord. Acts Nine, thirty-one. Words: Acts 9,31 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012</p> <p>The Holy Spirit strengthens and encourages God's people, the Church. He works in their hearts, giving people faith to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus as their Savior as they hear God's Word. He fills their hearts and helps them to grow in understanding God's Word and in loving God. He helps them to live in the fear of the Lord-- that is, He helps them want to honor and obey God most of all.</p>