

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Gave Us His Laws To Convict Us Of Sin, That We Might Be Saved

God made each of us with a heart that tells us what is right and wrong. When we hear God's laws, we know that they are right. When we disobey God's laws, we know that we are doing wrong. We know we are not the perfect law-keepers God created us to be and calls us to be.

God's laws remind us that we deserve God's punishment for our sins, but that's not all God has planned for His laws to do. He has also planned for His laws to show us our sin, that we would turn away from our sins and be saved.

God loves to save sinners! Jesus promised that whoever comes to Him, repenting of their sins and trusting in Him as their Savior, He will never turn away. No matter how bad of a lawbreaker they have been, He will forgive their sins and save them. He will forgive us all of our sins, if we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

CASE STORY

*adapted from Religious Stories for Young and Old
by Joel Beeke*

Our story is called:

The Case of the Robber's Riches.

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

1. What riches did the robbers steal?
2. Which robber found another, far greater kind of riches? How did he receive these?

This story takes place in the late 1700's, in one of the dark, hidden clefts in the wild, wooded hills of the beautiful Schwraswald (Black Forest) of Germany.

The spot certainly was a strange one for an auction. There was no auction hall; no great crowd of respectable people to bid for the beautiful items for sale. No. This auction took place at midnight in a place hidden among the dark-barked pine trees that gave the Black Forest its name.

The bidders gathered together under torchlight, even armed with knives and other weapons for protection! Who would come to such a place for an auction, you might wonder? Robbers, that's who. The very same robbers who earlier that evening had stolen the wagon of wealthy merchants, filled with all kinds of riches. Usually the robbers would sell their stolen loot in a nearby town. But tonight's catch was so huge that they felt sure that someone would get suspicious and turn them over to the sheriff if they sold any of it close by. So they decided to auction off their goods among themselves, then spread out and each sell their own portion all across the country.

One of the bandits stood in front of them, acting as auctioneer. Costly clothes and many other things were offered for sale, while a bottle of beer was passed round. Item after item was sold to the lucky robber who was able out bid his fellow thieves.

Then as almost a joke, the auctioneer held up a New Testament as the next article up for bid. "What will you give me this book, mates? I'm sure there are plenty of you here who need it!" the bandit began. The crowd laughed, clapped and cheered as the man said all sorts of bad things about God's Word.

"What? No bids, men? Why not? Surely someone here wants a fine book like this," the auctioneer sneered.

"Read us a chapter, first!" someone joked from the crowd. "We need to hear what's in it so we can decide how

much it's really worth."

Thinking this would be worth some good laughs, the other robbers urged the auctioneer on with cheers and applause. "Yes, yes, read us some! Read us some!" they yelled.

Encouraged by their applause, the auctioneer agreed. He opened the New Testament and began to read from it in a mocking voice, to the great amusement of the listeners. How they enjoyed making fun of God's Word! They were certain there was no place in their lives for anything God's Word said! That book told them they had all broken God's laws and they needed to repent of their sins or face His eternal punishment. They laughed at what the robber read. They didn't care what the New Testament said about God, His good laws or even about themselves. Its words were worth a good laugh; that was all. They would live however they pleased.

But in all their joking the robbers failed to notice the oldest thief was not joining in the fun. This was very strange, for usually he was the boldest leader in all their pranks and robbings. But there he was, sitting very quiet and deep in thought, his folded hands resting on his knees. What could this mean?

The reason was a very simple one. The chapter which the auctioneer had chosen to read was the very the same passage his godly father read to him at family worship time thirty years earlier. It was the last words he heard before running away from home to keep from being arrested by the police for a crime he had committed.

In all those years, he had never returned home, but he could still remember it all, as if it was just yesterday. There they were, all seated around the breakfast table, his father, with open Bible on the table, reading the same chapter which the auctioneer was reciting just now to sneers and jeers. There was his dear mother listening eagerly to the Word of God, as were his brothers and sisters. He saw himself, too, and remembered what was in his cold, stubborn heart that morning as he had listened to his father read.

"What place in my life is there for words like these?" he had thought to himself. "I don't care about God or His laws; I will live as I please!"

When he ran away from home that day, he ran away from God and His Word, too. Since that morning, he had never offered a prayer. He had pushed God out of his life,

completely.

But now that very same Word of God, so completely rejected before, was suddenly doing a mighty and miraculous work in this lost man's spirit. God's Holy Spirit began to work in his heart as he heard this Bible passage again. Soon other of the verses his father and mother taught him came to mind. God was giving this old man the gift of faith!

Caught up in all these wonderful memories, the robber chief forgot all that was taking place around him. He was jolted back to the present with a rough slap on the shoulder from the hand of his nearest companion. "Now, old dreamer, why are you not bidding for that book?" his friend joked. "You know you need it worse than anybody else, for you are the biggest sinner among us."

"Yes, that I am," the man said sadly. "Give me that book, auctioneer," he shouted. "I'll pay the full price for it!" he said thrusting the agreed amount of coins into the auctioneer's hands.

The auction continued that night until all the loot was sold. In the morning the robbers left to go one by one to distant villages to try to sell their goods, but the old robber didn't leave with them. Instead, he chose a hidden spot among the rocks to read God's Word and think. As he read, he was overwhelmed with the guilt of all the sinful things he had done.

"What a terrible sinner I have been!" he cried. "I chose to make no place in my life for God and His good laws, all these years. I have lived whatever sinful way pleased me. But I wonder, is it too late for me now? Is there anyway for someone like me to be forgiven by God after all I have done?" he wondered.

There was only one way to find the answer to that question: in God's Word. So on and on the old robber read, seeking for some comfort or hope or guidance. At last, the LORD answered his prayer as he read how Jesus had come to seek and save sinners, even terrible sinners like himself. What great news this was! Wasting not another moment, the old robbers repented of his sins and trusted in Jesus as His Savior. God forgave him. He was saved!

This old man's repentance started with a prayer, but it didn't end there. Repentance means turning away from your sinful life and turning to live a new life--one that aims to please God. This man knew he would have to make a lot of changes if he was really to be one of God's people. And

so he did! He decided to leave the wicked men who had been his companions and to stop robbing. At daybreak he would seek out the pastor of the nearest village and tell him all that had happened. Then, he would turn himself in to the sheriff to receive the punishment he deserved for all the robberies.

So when morning came, the old robber left his hiding place and headed straight for a nearby village. Going to the pastor's house, he told him how he had come to repent of his sins and turn to Christ to seek salvation as a lost sinner. The pastor listened to the man's story and rejoiced to see his true repentance and faith. Yes, Jesus had died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for all who turn and trust in Him. As a true believer in Jesus, even all of the many sins of this old robber had been forgiven by God, once and for all.

Together the pastor and the old man walked down to the village jail to turn himself in. As he entered the jail building, who should he see there behind bars, but all of his companions! Last night while he had been in his hiding place crying out to God for mercy, they had all been caught and arrested. He was the only one to get away!

The old man told the sheriff everything: how he had been a robber for thirty years and had helped rob the merchants with the rest of the men already behind bars. But he also told him of the change that God had brought in his heart. "God in His mercy has used His good Law to convict me of my sins and save me--yes, even me! I am a new man because of Jesus. That is why I have come to turn myself in."

The sheriff was shocked. "Your companions will probably be put to death for their crimes, but it may be that the archduke will show you mercy because you turned yourself in and made this confession," the sheriff told him. "I will do what I can to help you."

Trial day came. Just as the sheriff predicted. All of other robbers were sentenced to death, but the old man was treated with mercy. He was sentenced to serve ten years in prison, but was released at the end of seven, because of his good behavior. He went to live a good life in the service of a kind, rich man.

The old robber proved to be a true follower of Jesus Christ through the rest of his life. Never did he turn back to his old ways. He was a lasting blessing in his master's household to the very end. And on the day he died, he

used his very last breath to bless His Savior who had come to seek and save sinners, even terrible sinners like him.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Gave Us His Laws to Convict Us of Sin That We Might Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

What about you and me? Many of us have heard about God and His good laws from the time we were very small, just like that robber. And we have the same choice he had: to know it, but find no place for to work in our hearts; or, to ask the Holy Spirit to use it to convict us of our sins and turn us in repentance and faith to Jesus. Let's praise God for letting us know Him and His good laws. Let's ask Him to use it to work in our hearts that we trust Him as our Savior and grow to love Him and live for Him more and more each day.

<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’s laws teach us how God wants us to live. They remind us that we are all law-breakers, who do not keep His laws. But, they also point us to Jesus, and the mercy God can show us through Him. <i>Answer: True!</i></p> <p>2. Crack the Case Questions a. What riches did the robbers steal? Answer: They robbed merchants of whatever they carried in their wagons.</p> <p>b. Which robber found another, far greater kind of riches? How did he receive these? Answer: An old-man robber found salvation through Jesus. When he heard God’s Word read, the Holy Spirit worked in his heart. He was convicted of his sins, turned from them and trusted in Jesus as his Savior.</p> <p>3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7 “ ___ the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is ___. Let the wicked forsake his way and the ___ man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have ___ on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.” Answers: Seek; near; evil; mercy.</p>	<p>Breathe on Me, Breath of God <i>PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 12</i></p> <p>Verse 1 Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, And do what Thou wouldst do.</p> <p>Words: Edwin Hatch; Music: Robert Jackson</p> <p>We are all sinners. We were made to love and obey God, but we have all turned away from that most wonderful of lives. Only God can change us and He can, by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nicknamed the “Breath of God.” Our breath fills our body with the air that it needs to live. The Holy Spirit fills God’s people with Himself so that they can know and love God and have His eternal life. God will send His Holy Spirit to work this way in us when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This song is a prayer asking Him to do this.</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 so merciful to sinful people. We praise You for being the giver of Your powerful Word, the Bible.</p> <p>C God, we confess that many times, like the man in our story, we hear and know Your Word, the Bible, but we would rather do what we want to do. We too often choose to reject You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!</p> <p>T God, we thank You for being so full of compassion and mercy that You would still forgive and accept people who have chosen to deliberately ignore and rebel against You and Your good laws. Thank You for using Your Word, including Your laws, not just to show us that we are sinners, but to convict us of our sins that we might turn to You and be saved.</p> <p>S God, work in our hearts. Help us to know and love You and Your good Word. Use Your Word to convict us of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.</p>	<p>Seek the LORD <i>PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 13</i></p> <p>Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call on Him while He is near, Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call on Him while He is near, Let the wicked forsake his way, And the evil man his thought, Let him turn, turn to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him, He will have mercy on him. Isaiah Fifty-five, six and seven.</p> <p>Words adapted from Isaiah 55:6-7 Constance Dever © 2011</p> <p>This verse tells us how God wants His people to love others. This is how He has treated them through Jesus. He wants them to be like Him and go and love others this way, too. God’s Holy Spirit helps them love in these ways. He helps them love even when it is very hard.</p>