

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 4:

**Jesus Kept God's Law Perfectly,
So by His Grace He Could Save God's People**

From the time Adam and Eve became lawbreakers, people have offered sacrifices for their sins.

God's laws tell us there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. God commanded the Israelites to offer up the blood of animals when they sinned, as a sign of their desire to turn from their sins and trust in Him to save them. God received their offerings, given in repentance and faith, and allowed them to remain in fellowship with Him.

But the blood of animals could never take away the sins of a human. Only the blood of a human who lived God's laws perfectly and offered up his life in the sinner's place could do that. God, in His mercy, did just this. He sent His Son Jesus to take on human flesh and be that perfect sacrifice for sins.

Jesus was fully God and fully human. He was perfect; He was not born with a sinful heart like us. Jesus kept all of God's laws. He loved God and others perfectly. He fulfilled all of God's Law with His life. He offered up His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for God's people's sins. He took upon Himself the punishment they deserved that they might be forgiven their sins, once and for all. On the third day, God raised Jesus, showing that the power of sin and death had indeed been broken by His perfect sacrifice.

None of us will ever be able to earn salvation with a perfectly lived life, but each of us can have salvation through God's grace—His undeserved gift of salvation to sinners—if we come to Him in repentance and faith in Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Persistent Snowstorm.

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

1. Who was out in the snowstorm? How did he change his plans because it was so persistent? (i.e. because it wouldn't stop).
2. What did this man learn that changed his life? What did the snow remind him of?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place in 1850 in Colchester, England.

Not even a shadow of hope. That's how Charles felt. How could he ever get rid of his guilty conscience? It weighed down upon him like a heavy burden. Yet nothing he did seemed to help. He got up early in the morning to read good books about God—maybe they would tell him what to do. He tried really hard to do good things and love God—maybe being a good person would help. He sought God for six months, praying: "Lord, save me!" Yet not even then was there peace. His guilty conscience remained. Still Charles felt not even a shadow of hope.

The more Charles thought about himself, the less hope he had. "God is just and holy. I am a sinner; a lawbreaker. No matter how hard I try, I still rebel against Him. Wouldn't He be unfair to save someone like me?" So on Charles went, with not even a shadow of hope.

One day Charles got caught out in a snowstorm. He watched the dark ground change to dazzling white as the flakes covered it up. "My heart is dark with sin as the ground is dark with soil. If only my sin could be cover up and my heart changed to be white as snow! But how? How could God change my heart? How will there ever be any hope for me?" he wondered.

Even though Charles felt so hopeless, he didn't give up seeking peace for his guilty conscience and forgiveness for his sins. "I will visit every church in town, a different one each Sunday," Charles decided. "Perhaps in one of them I will find what I am looking for." So that's what he did. Charles went to big churches and small churches of all kinds. He heard many good messages. One man preached about God being in control of all things; another preached that Christians should live out their love to God by obeying His Law; and yet another about the glorious riches that await Christians in heaven with Jesus. But never did Charles hear how a he might find peace for his

guilty conscience and forgiveness for his sins. "If these pastors don't give me the answer, then who can? "If the Lord won't answer my prayers, then what can be done?" Charles wondered. Perhaps I really am beyond "even a shadow of hope."

But of course the Lord was answering Charles' prayers, but in His perfect timing. On one particular Sunday in January, just weeks after the snowstorm, the Lord at last gave Charles the answer he was seeking. Charles arose as usual and prepared to visit the next church on his list. Perhaps today would be the day where he would hear the words he longed to hear.

"Snow again!" Charles thought as he looked out the window at the heavy snow falling. "I better bundle up. It's a very long walk to the church I'm visiting today."

A blast of cold and snowflakes hit Charles in the face as he opened the door of the house. It was enough of a storm to keep many at home, but not Charles. The burden of his sins and his guilty conscience troubled him far more than any storm. So Charles went out into the storm and headed down the street towards church.

Heavier and heavier the snow fell. The cobbled streets, usually filled with people going to church, were almost completely deserted. Still Charles tramped on. He didn't like the snow, wind and cold, but he wanted nothing more than to be beyond "not even a shadow of hope."

The snow piled up onto Charles' ankles and calves now. It was getting hard to walk and he was so cold! It was still such a long way to the church he had chosen! Charles paused to decide whether to keep going or turn back. As he did, he noticed a little chapel nearby. He had heard about this chapel but hadn't put it on his list to visit...and for very good reason, he thought. It was said that the people there sang hymns so loudly that it made your head ache-- which Charles felt he could do better without. But the thought of some place, warm, dry and nearby was worth chancing a headache, decided Charles, as headed for its door.

Inside the plain, little chapel, Charles found only a dozen or so people who had braved the storm like he. As the service began, Charles settled himself on a pew near the back. After some hardy hymn-singing and prayers, it was time for the sermon. But where was the pastor? He still had not appeared. Apparently the storm had gotten the best of him.

At last, after a long silence a very thin-looking man, a

shoemaker or tailor or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. He was a very simple man with little education of any kind. He stuck closely to the short Bible verse he chose to preach upon, for he knew so little to say. "Look unto Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth," he read.

The man did not even say the words correctly, but that did not matter to Charles. "There is a glimpse of hope for me in that verse. Perhaps this man will tell me what I want to know," Charles thought as he listened.

"My dear friends," the man continued, "this is a very simple verse indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a deal of pains. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just, 'Look.' Well, you can look. A man needn't be worth a lot of money to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the verse says, 'Look unto Me.' Ay!" said he, "many of you are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. But Jesus Christ say, 'Look unto Me. I am sweatin' great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin' on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to Heaven. Look unto Me; I am sittin' at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! Look unto Me!" the man said.

When the thin man had gone on like that for about ten minutes he had little else to say. Then he looked straight at Charles. They were strangers; and yet, it was as if the Lord had allowed that simple man to know all of Charles' heart. "Young man," he said to Charles, "you look very miserable. You will always be miserable in life and in death if you don't obey the words of this verse.

But, if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved." Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, "Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live."

At once Charles saw the way of salvation. And oh, he looked until he could almost have looked his eyes away. There and then the cloud of sin was gone, the darkness of guilt rolled away, and that moment he knew peace from guilt and forgiveness of his sins.

Charles felt as if he could have sprung from the seat on which he sat, and called out: "I am forgiven! I am forgiven! There was no shadow of hope for me when I depended upon myself. There is no way to ever be for sinners to be good enough to satisfy the holy God with their own good

deeds. But Jesus Christ, He kept God's laws perfectly. He never sinned. On the cross He offered up His life as the perfect sacrifice for my sins! By His grace, He has done for me what I could never do for myself. Through Christ, there is not only a shadow of hope; there is hope so great that no one can measure it! It is infinite; it is forever!" he knew. At last God had given Charles what he was looking for: peace for his guilty conscience; forgiveness of his sins--all through Jesus Christ.

When the service was over, Charles stepped out of the warm building and back into the wild storm. The snow had gotten much deeper while he had been at church. It would be a difficult trip home. But it wasn't the snow's depth that Charles was thinking about right then; it was its color: white! Pure, dazzling, white! Just like his heart was, now that he had looked to Christ and been forgiven. The darkness of guilt and sin were more than covered over. They were gone, once and for all! Charles felt as if he could dance through its fluffy banks all the way home. Praise God! Through Jesus, even he, Charles Spurgeon, was far beyond "not even a shadow of hope!" And he was never going back.

Charles Spurgeon grew up to be one of the greatest preachers of all time. To know God and to tell others about peace for guilty consciences and forgiveness of sins through Jesus became one of his greatest pleasures in life. He had no fear to share this good news with the mightiest prince or the poorest beggar on the street. All people were without even a shadow of hope of salvation unless they looked to Christ for forgiveness of their sins. He wanted to make sure every person he met knew this offer of hope, too.

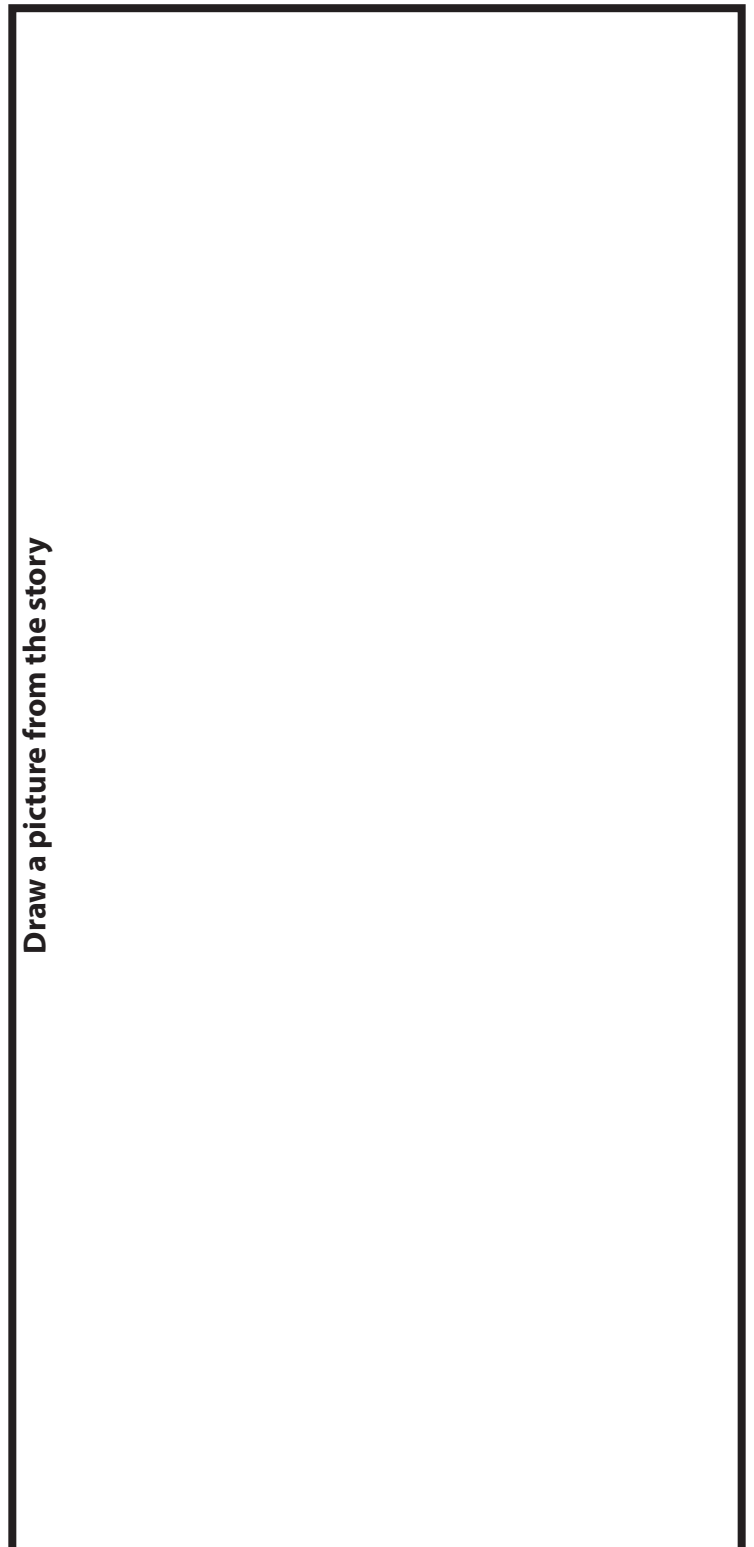
Our Bible Truth is:
Jesus Kept God's Laws Perfectly,
So by His Grace He Could Save God's People

Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 3:18
 "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

Thousands of people received peace of heart, forgiveness of sins and the delight of knowing the Lord through Charles Spurgeon's faithful witness. What about you and me? Who do we know who needs to hear about Jesus? Who will tell them if not us? Do we think we are not smart enough or old enough to share about Jesus? Think

about the simple man who spoke in little chapel the day of the snowstorm. Do we think no one will listen when we share? Look at what the Lord did for Charles Spurgeon?

Let's praise God for offering to forgive us through Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us share with boldness His wonderful offer of salvation with others, too, that they might be saved.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Jesus is the only one who ever lived out God's laws perfectly., That's why only He could be the perfect sacrifice for sins.
 Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was out in the snowstorm? How did he change his plans because it was so persistent? (i.e. because it wouldn't stop).
 Answer: Charles Spurgeon. He went to a completely different church for Sunday services.

b. What did this man learn that changed his life? What did the snow remind him of?
 Answer: He heard that God forgave sinners, not based on their works, but on Jesus' perfect sacrifice on the cross. The white snow that covered the dark earth reminded him of how God had covered over his sins forever through Jesus.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
1 Peter 3:18
 "For Christ ___ for sins once for all, the righteous for the ___, to bring you to ___."
 Answers: died; unrighteous; God.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace
PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 14,15

Verse 1
 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
 That saved a wretch like me.
 I once was lost, but now am found.
 Was blind but now I see.

Verse 2
 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear
 The hour I first believed!

Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell

We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God's laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them "sight" to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the worker of all things for the good of His people. We praise You for even using a bad snowstorm to bring the thin man to preach and Charles to hear to the good news of the gospel and be saved.

C God, we confess that like Charles, we are sinners. We cannot live lives that please You by our own good works. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that You offer us salvation through Jesus. We don't have to depend upon our own good works. We can depend upon Jesus!

S God, work in our hearts that we see our sin, turn away from it and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Forgive us our sins. Make our hearts clean and fresh, like the white snow that covered the dark ground, as Charles walked through it on his way home.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For Christ Died for Sins
PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 16

For Christ died for sins, once for all,
 The righteous for the unrighteous,
 To bring you to God,
 Bring you to God,
 For Christ died to bring you to God.
 First Peter Three, eighteen.

Words adapted from 1 Peter 3:18 Constance Dever © 2011

Jesus chose to suffer and die on the cross as the perfect substitute for all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as Savior. He alone is righteous. He alone kept God's laws perfectly, so he alone could bring us to God. He knew none of us could never pay for our own sins. We would never be able to come to God on our own. So He chose to give up His life to give them salvation by His grace--His free gift given to undeserving sinners, like you and me. Yes, He would bring us to God.