

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 NIV 1984

"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good. His love endures forever."

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Even before God created the world, He loved His people. Even back then, He knew all about them. He knew that they would be sinners like everyone else. He knew they would all rebel against Him and deserve His punishment for their sins.

Yet even though He knew all this about them before even a single one of them was born, He loved them deeply and wanted them to be His people. He chose to set His love upon them in a special way. He chose to send His Son, Jesus, to pay for their sins. He chose that by the Holy Spirit, He would give them faith in Jesus, and through that faith, He would forgive their sins. He would give them each a new heart to love and obey Him. They would be His special people--a countless number from every language and people on earth, who would live to enjoy Him and praise His amazing love forever.

We can know God's love and be His dearly loved 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 2 Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Doctor Who Needed Patience.

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

1. Who was the doctor who needed patience? Who needed to be patient with him? How?
2. What did the Lord do to bring the change that was so patiently waited for?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out around 1839 in Scotland.

William put the last of his things into the big, leather trunk. "Wait, William! Don't close it! I have something else for you to take with you," his mother said. She placed a beautiful, new Bible in his hands. He opened it up to the cover page and saw she had written her name, his name and a Bible verse.

"You'll need this, William," she told him. "You're just seventeen years old. Edinburgh is a big city compared to Montrose. You will enjoy many new things while you study at the university there: new friends, teachers, and things to do. There will be new temptations, too. Read your Bible! Don't forget what I've taught you about God. And remember: I will be praying for you."

She placed the Bible in the trunk and William shut it. They said their farewells and he was off. William's mother loved her son so much! She had cared for him well these past seventeen years. She knew God's love and wanted William to know it, too. Many times she had told him the amazing story of God's love for sinners. She told him how all people had rebelled against God and His good ways. How they no longer had hearts of love for Him and deserved God's never-ending punishment for their sins. Yet God loved His sinful people and chose to save them even though they did not love Him. He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross and take the punishment for sins for all who would ever believe in Him and turn from their sins. His Holy Spirit would live in their hearts, giving them faith and love for God. They would get to go on loving and enjoying Him forever. What was the verse she had taught him? "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever would believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life." How she wanted him to believe in Jesus! How she wanted him to know this God who loved first!

William thought Edinburgh was amazing. He walked

up and down the hilly, cobblestone streets, looking at the tall, stone houses, stately government buildings, many shops and markets all a-bustle with buyers and sellers. Most breath-taking of all, was the magnificent Edinburgh Castle that rose high above the city at the top of the steep street called the Royal Mile.

Life in Edinburgh was everything William's mother said it would be: full of opportunities and temptations! William was studying to be a doctor. Here at the University of Edinburgh he was getting to learn from some of the finest doctors of his time.

But unfortunately, these men taught him more than just medicine. They didn't believe in God and looked down on anyone who did. William wanted to please these men, so he chose to reject Him, too. He would do nothing to do with the God who loved first.

Then there were William's new friends. These were all very smart, but they chose to do many foolish things. They spent their time getting drunk and doing other bad things. William wanted to please his new friends, so he started doing what they did. Before long he craved whiskey so much that he sipped on a drink almost all the time.

Whiskey was expensive and William was poor. He started selling anything he could to the pawn shop for money to buy whiskey. "I certainly don't need this Bible my mother gave me," he decided, scooping it up with other things to take and sell. "It looks as good as new. It should be worth a lot," he thought.

Whiskey got the better of many university students. They drank so much that they couldn't keep up with their studies and had to leave; but not William. William kept studying right along with his drinking. He finished as one of the very best students in the school. He went to work at the most important hospital in Edinburgh and soon became their best doctor. He was known for saving the lives of patients no one else could help. He became very rich and very proud. His favorite sound was the rattling of the emergency room carts made as a badly wounded person was rolled into the hospital. "Here's another chance for me to beat death with my own great skill," he told himself.

William wasn't just proud of his skill as a doctor. He was proud all the time. He wanted nothing to do with God. In school, he had chosen to forget about God, but now he outright scorned Him. He joined the Infidel Club, a club for

atheists (people who do not believe in God at all). They enjoyed making fun of Christians and doing bad things the Bible said was wrong. William was particularly good at mocking God and soon became one of the club's leaders.

William had convinced himself that there was no God Who Loved First, but he was wrong. That wonderful God was still very much alive and at work-- even loving William. He had loved William before He created the world. He loved William when before William was born He loved William when his mother told him the good news of Jesus. He even loved William now as he mocked Him. And one day--just the right day--William was going to know this.

That right day came when a man, crushed in an accident at work, was rushed into the hospital. The man looked hopelessly hurt. Dr. William Mackay was called for. Perhaps he could cheat death again as he had so many times before.

William took one look at the man and knew not even he could help. William looked at the man's face. It was filled with suffering, yet there was something else he saw that surprised him: a look of peace. William couldn't make sense of it. Never had he seen this look on such an injured man in all his years of doctoring.

"Tell me, doctor, how bad is it" the man asked.

"You'll be all right," William said, untruthfully.

"No, doctor. Tell me the truth. I want to know if this is life or death," the man insisted. "I'm not afraid to die. I am ready. I trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I have to die, I know I am going to be with Him."

William told him the truth: "You have no more than three hours to live."

Most men would have broken down in fear with these words, but not this man. Once more William could hardly believe what he saw. Not even this news broke the peace on this man's face.

"Thank you, doctor," was all he said.

"Is there anything you would like us to do for you?" William asked, with unusual kindness.

"Yes! Here in my pocket is my money. Could someone please take it to the lady I rent my room from and pay her. And could they ask her to send me the book?"

"What book is that?" the doctor asked.

"Oh, just the book," the man said. "She will know."

William asked a hospital worker to carry out the dying man's wishes. He went to care for other patients, couldn't

stop thinking about the dying man's face and words: "I am ready to die, doctor. I trust in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ." Ready to die because of Jesus? You could tell he truly believed it by the way he was dying. And what was this book he wanted?

At last William went back to find out what happened. Did the man get his book before he died? "What happened to the man who had the terrible accident?" he asked the nurse.

"He died a few minutes ago," she replied.

"And did he get his book?" William asked. "What kind of book was it? A bank book that told how much money he had?"

"Yes, he got it. Just before he died. It's there, under his pillow, see for yourself," she answered.

William lifted up the dead man's pillow and pulled out the book. It was a Bible. It looked so familiar. He opened the cover and gasped at what he saw: there was his mother's name, his name and a Bible verse, written in his own mother's handwriting. This was his Bible! The Bible he had sold for whiskey long ago.

William didn't miss God's love in all this. Surely there was a God Who Loved First. Surely He had loved William all these years that William had rejected and mocked him. William's hard heart thawed in that moment. His heart was filled with shame over his sin and how he had treated God and wasted the life He had given him. Overcome with sadness and grief, William tucked the Bible in his coat and hurried to his private office. He fell on his knees and prayed to God: "Please forgive me, God. Please have mercy on me!" he cried.

What were the words he had heard his mother tell him so long ago? "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." This was the God Who Loved First. He had sent His Son Jesus to die for sinners who believe in Him—even for terrible sinners like himself. Right then and there, he trusted in Jesus as his own Savior. He was forgiven his sins and filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh, such peace, oh, such joy William knew at that moment! For now at last, he knew the God Who Loved First. William's heart filled with love for Him in return. This was life as it was meant to be! Eternal life: knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ! And this he would get to enjoy forever and ever.

After a few years, William stopped being a doctor and became a preacher. He wanted to spend all his time telling people about this amazing God Who Loved First. He wanted them to know that even if they had been terrible sinners like he had, that they could still turn to Him, confess their sins, trust Jesus and be saved. Then they could have the great delight of loving Him and knowing Him, too.

Something For You and Me

Our Bible Truth is:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 1:4-6:

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

What about you and me? Have we done sinful things? Have we dishonored God or mocked Him? Could the God Who Loved First love us? Yes, He could! Yes, He will! Whoever confesses their sins to Him and trusts in Jesus as their Savior, He promises to forgive their sins and make them one of His own, special people. The Holy Spirit will come and live in them and fill their hearts with joy and peace, too. They can love Him who loved them first forever and ever, just like William. Let's praise this God Who Loved First. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts, that we might know Him and love Him more and more.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

God didn't know His people would be sinners. If He had, He wouldn't have chosen them.

Answer: False! God knew that all of His people would rebel against Him and He chose them anyway. He chose to save them all through Jesus. How amazing is the LORD!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the doctor who needed patience? Who needed to be patient with him? How?

D Answer: r. William Mackay. His mother. She needed to patiently wait for the Lord to answer her prayers and hopes that her son would be saved.

b. What did the Lord do to bring the change that was so patiently waited for?

Answer: He used the very Bible that she had him take with him to school.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

Ephesians 1:4-6

"For He chose us in Him ___ the creation of the world to be holy and ___ in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through ___, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he ___."

Answers: before; blameless; Jesus Christ; loves.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Oh, How I Love Jesus

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 8

Verse 1

There is a name I love to hear,
I love to sing its worth;
It sounds as music in my ear,
The sweetest name on earth.

Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Oh, how I love Jesus,
Because He first loved me.

Words: Frederick Whitfield Music: Anonymous

Through Jesus, God loved His people before they loved Him. He loved them while they were still sinners. He loved them even before the creation of the world. This makes God's people so happy! They know that their sinful hearts would never choose God if He had loved them and chose them first. They know without God choosing to send Jesus to save them from their sins, they would never ever know God. This makes the name of Jesus the sweetest name on earth.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the great Lover of Your sinful people through Christ. You loved them long before they turn from their sins and love You..

C God, we confess that many times, like William, we know the good news of Jesus, but choose to do things our own way. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for not loving Your people based on their own goodness, but on Your love for them through Jesus. Thank You that You can turn even the most rebellious, unbelieving heart to know and love You.

S God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Work in the hearts of others we know that do not believe in Him.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For He Chose Us

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 9

For He chose us in Him before the creation,
Before the creation of the world,
To be holy and blameless in his sight,
Yes, he chose us before the creation of the world.
In love he predestined us to be adopted as His sons,
Through Jesus Christ,
With His will and pleasure
Yes, In love He predestined us.

Words: Ephesians 1:4-5 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

God loved His people long before they loved Him. He loved them and chose to adopt them as His people, even before He created (founded) the world. Why did He do this? Because it pleased Him to do it! It would show how wonderful He is and how great the good gifts He gives His people because of Jesus. We think of what He's done and we praise Him for being so good to people like us. People who are sinners, but through Jesus, are made to be holy-- without sin and without blame in His sight.