

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 3: God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three persons, but just one God. God could live forever happy, in the wonderful, perfect fellowship of love He has within Himself. He has never needed anything or anyone to be complete.

No, God didn't need anyone else to love, yet He chose to create people with a heart to know and love Him. He wanted to share Himself with these people--especially His people: all those who would ever turn and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

But even before He created the world, even before He created them, God knew that His love would be very, very costly. All people--including His people-- would rebel against Him. They would break fellowship with Him. They would deserve His punishment, not His love. Only a huge act of love on His part would rescue them. And right then, before the beginning, God chose to make it!

He chose to give His one, dear Son Jesus to take the punishment for their sins. So at just the right time, Jesus left the wonderful, perfect fellowship with God the Father and Holy Spirit in heaven and came to earth to live as a man. He lived the perfect life needed to please God. On the cross, He offered it up as the perfect sacrifice for sin. He took all the terrible punishment for the sins of God's people so they could be forgiven. Because of Jesus, they would get to know God and delight in His wonderful love.

God has shown His love for His people in many ways, but the greatest way He has shown His love is by giving Jesus to save them. We can become God's people 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 3 Bible Verse: 1 John 4:10

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

CASE STORY

*Proverbs 8:30; Isaiah 41:2; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; 26-28;
John 1:1-18; 3:16; 17:25; Ephesians 1:1-14*

Our story is: The Case of the Matchless Marvel.

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

1. Who was matchless in His love?
2. What did He do that was such a marvel (so amazing that we can hardly believe it)??

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus came to earth to live. It is a story like none other. It is about a love so deep, so high, and so wide that it can't be measured. A love so beautiful and perfect that no one could ever repeat it. An absolutely matchless love. Who is this love story about? It is about God the Father's love for His Son, Jesus.

From forever past--long before this world was created-- God the Father loved His Son with this beautiful, perfect love. The Son was the Father's Chosen One and His Spirit delighted in Him daily. The Son rejoiced before His Father always. The Father's love for His Son was matchless--greater by far than His love for anything or anyone else. It was more than we can ever imagine. He held the Son in His bosom-- the deepest, dearest part of His heart--where they could share in complete closeness. They were one; and every moment was filled with Perfect Wonderfulness.

What would you do if you loved someone with this kind of matchless love? What would you do if you enjoyed such Perfect Wonderfulness with them? You wouldn't give them up for anything, would you?

But do you know what God the Father did with His beloved Son? He gave Him up. And He didn't just give Him up to friends. He gave Him up to His enemies. And what is even more surprising, He gave Him up to His enemies to suffer all of God the Father's terrible wrath for their sins, so they could be forgiven and become His own sons and daughters!

Why would God the Father do such a thing? Did someone make Him do this? Nope. He chose to do it freely--it was His own good pleasure and will. And it wasn't just God the Father who chose to do this. God the Son loved His Father with the same, matchless love. He rejoiced to fulfill His Father's plan, even though He would have to suffer so much.

But do you see what all this means? This love story isn't just about God the Father's love for His Son. It is also about

God's marvelous love for His people. Oh, how much He chose to endure and suffer to save them! So at just the right time, God gave His Son out of His bosom—the deepest, dearest part of His heart-- and He began to form as a tiny human baby inside of Mary. Jesus was still completely the Son of God, but now also He was completely human, too.

So, on just the right night, Jesus was born near Bethlehem and placed in a manger of straw. Angels announced God's wonderful plan of salvation. People rejoiced at the good news of salvation. But it was not all easy and happy, this plan of salvation. Even the night Jesus was born, it was Mary's little human arms that held Jesus close to her heart. God the Father had given Jesus out of His bosom to save His people, choosing less closeness for their sake.

When Jesus grew up, it was time to tell everyone about God's Kingdom. Before He began, He went to John the Baptist to be baptized at the Jordan River. Down in the water He went, then back up again. As He came up, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove. The Father watched everything His Son was doing. His heart was filled with love and perfect satisfaction for Him. He spoke from heaven saying, "This is My Son, whom I love. With Him I am well pleased!"

Some people agreed. They heard Jesus' words. They saw the amazing things Jesus did. They believed that He was God's Son, the Messiah, come to save them. They followed Him and learned from Him.

But many more rejected Jesus. "God has no Son. God is only God the Father," they said to Him. "You are a liar. If you are anyone's son, you are Satan's son. He's the one giving you power to do the amazing things you do." They plotted to capture Him and have Him put to death on a cross.

None of this surprised God the Father or Jesus, the Son of God. God knew this was what these people would do. God had woven it all into His good and wise plan. He would use even these wicked deeds to glorify Himself and to bring salvation to His sinful people. It was wonderful what God would do, but it was not easy or all happy. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit knew how much Jesus would suffer!

The closer the day when Jesus would die came, the harder it was for Him to keep going! The night before He was to die on the cross, Jesus fell face down to the ground and prayed: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup—this terrible time of suffering and death—be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."

Can you imagine how the Father felt? This was not just anyone suffering! This was His Son whom He had delighted in and had loved from forever past. The Father certainly had the power to rescue Jesus and remove Him from the suffering that lay before Him. Thousands of angels stood ready to come to His rescue. He could have taken Him out of the world right then and there and brought Him back into the deepest, dearest closeness of His bosom. Jesus could have chosen not to suffer, but both kept to the plan. Only this terrible path of suffering and death would save God's people. So as hard as it was, the Father and the Son were pleased to complete this glorious, wise plan; this gift of indescribable love for His people.

Judas, one of Jesus' close disciples, led soldiers to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was praying, greeting Him with a brotherly kiss. The soldiers seized Jesus; and all His friends ran away, leaving Him to His enemies and death.

All the rest of the night, the Jews and Romans questioned Jesus, insulted Him and hurt Him. In the morning, they gathered a crowd where the Roman leader, Pilate was making a final decision about Jesus. "What shall I do with Jesus, called the Messiah?" Pilate asked.

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" they shouted angrily.

Pilate agreed. Soldiers took Jesus away. They put a scarlet robe on Him and pressed a crown of long, twisted thorns down on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of Him and mocked Him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on Him and took the staff and struck him with it. They took away the robe, then led him away and crucified Him.

Jesus suffered terribly! Crowds shook their heads at Him and insulted Him: "Come down from the cross, if You are the Son of God!" some said.

The worst Jesus had to suffer now came. And from whom? From God the Father, Himself-- the very One who loved Jesus with a matchless love. Just as planned, God the Father poured out His terrible wrath upon His Son. On Him, He laid all of the punishment for the sins of His people—all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

As the weight of the Father's wrath crushed His dear Son, Jesus felt completely separated from His Father. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me!" He cried out in anguish. Oh, what pain! Oh, what separation! Yes, for Jesus,

but also for God the Father. This was His Son who He was separating from Himself with His wrath for His people's sins! His Son who had dwelt in His bosom—the deepest, dearest part of His love—from forever past! How great His grief must have been to treat His Son this way! Yet He loved His sinful people so much that He was even willing to do this.

At last it was over. Jesus had taken all God's punishment for His people's sins. "It is finished," Jesus cried out. "Into Your hands I commit My spirit," He told His Father as He died. Friends came and took His body. They laid it in a tomb and rolled a stone in front of it.

This seemed to be the end of the Son of God, but of course it was not. The wise and glorious plan had worked! Jesus had beaten death! It couldn't keep Him in the grave! On the third day, God the Father raised Him to life again. How His disciples rejoiced!

But there was even greater joy in heaven. For after forty days, Jesus rose to heaven to be with His Father. Once more the Father drew Jesus in His bosom—into the deepest, dearest part of His heart. Once more God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit delighted in the fullness of Perfect Wonderfulness as before.

But there was even more. For God had so loved the world that He had given His only Son that whoever believed in Him would not perish, but have eternal life. Now in Jesus, God the Father drew all of His people into His bosom—into the deepest, dearest part of His heart. All the days of their lives they would know His love in their hearts. And one day, they would go to live with Him forever, being filled up completely with enjoy Him, the wonderful, glorious, infinite God forever more.

Our Bible Truth is:

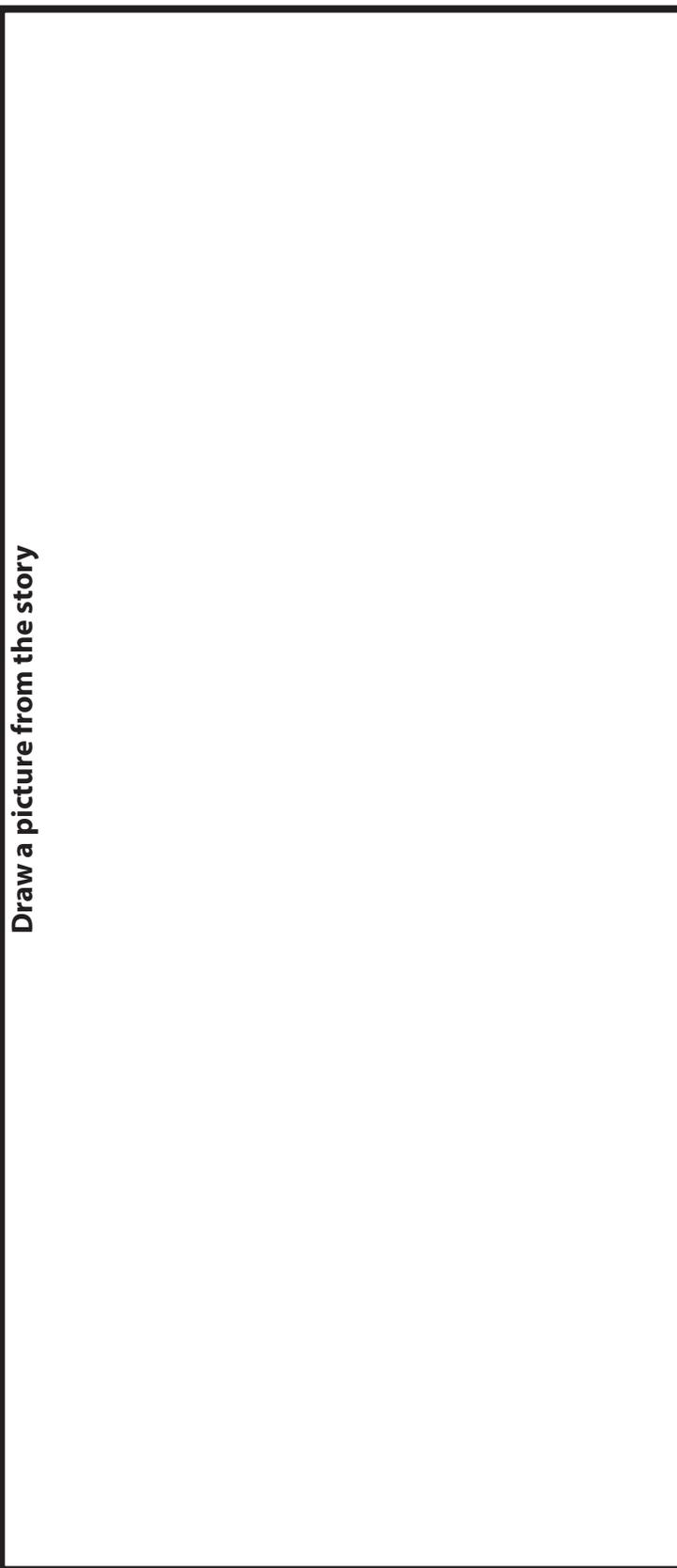
God Showed the Depths of His Love By Giving His Son Jesus to Save His People

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

How great is the love of God the Father for His Son Jesus! How great is His love for His people, that He would endure such suffering for them! What should you and I think about this? What should we do? We should be amazed that God would love any of us like this! We should praise God for freely giving His Son to save sinful people like us. We

should ask Him to forgive our sins and ask Him to be our own Savior. We should ask Him to help us never forget how deep His love is and to show us how we can live our lives to please Him as the only "thank you" we have for all that He has done for His sinful people.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God saved His people at a very high cost to Himself! Jesus, the Son of God, had to suffer and die for their sins in order for them to be His people.
 Answer: True! And we can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. Who was matchless in His love?
 Answer: God was matchless in His love for His Son, Jesus. But also in His love for sinners, like you and me.

b. What did He do that was such a marvel (so amazing that we can hardly believe it)?
 Answer: He gave His Son, whom He loved so much, to suffer and die for sinners like you and me, that all who might turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior, would be forgiven their sins and be saved. He would adopt them into His family and treat them with the same love as He does His dear, Son, Jesus.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
1 John 4:10
 "This is love: not that ___ loved God, but that He loved ___ and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our ___."
 Answers: we; us; sins.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory
PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 10

Verse 1
 To God be the glory,
 great things He hath done;
 So loved He the world
 that He gave us His Son,
 Who yielded His life
 an atonement for sin,
 And opened the lifegate
 that all may go in.

Refrain:
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
 Let the earth hear His voice!
 Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
 Let the people rejoice!
 O come to the Father, thro' Jesus the Son,
 And give Him the glory,
 great things He hath done

Words: Fanny Crosby Music: William H. Doane

We give glory to God for giving us His Son who He loved so much to be the payment for sins. Sinners could never pay for their sins. Only by Jesus giving up His life in the place of sinners could there ever be a way for them to come to the Father.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Great Lover and Savior of Your undeserving people. People You wanted to make Your dearly loved people so much that You chose to send Jesus, Your dear Son to die to save them.

C God, we confess that we all choose not to love You. None of us deserve to be Your people. None of us can be saved by our own goodness. We deserve Your punishment. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for loving Your people so much that You would send Jesus to suffer more than anyone could ever suffer to save sinful people like us!

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Fill our hearts with love for You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

This Is Love
PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 11

This is love,
 Not that we loved God,
 But that He, that he loved us,
 He sent his Son,
 And He sent His Son,
 An atoning sacrifice for sin.
 He sent his Son,
 And He sent His Son,
 An atoning sacrifice for sin.
 First John, Four, ten.

Words adapted from 1 John 4:10 Music: Constance Dever © 2011

We are all sinners who have rebelled against God, yet God chose to love us and do it in the deepest way possible: He sent Jesus to save us. Yes, He sent His dearly loved Son, to come to earth to be the atoning sacrifice that would pay for our sins. He would live a perfect life then offer it up as the payment that would bring the forgiveness we needed. And He chose to do this while we still were rebelling against Him! How wonderful is this free gift of God! How deep is His love! This atoning sacrifice is for us, too, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.