

Story Time with Jesus



Bible Stories

-As told by Jesus-



Book 12

Story Time with Jesus—Book 12

Bible Stories

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(Jesus speaking:)

The Power of the Spirit of God

Can you put the power of lightning in a small cardboard box and keep it there? That gives a little idea of what it might be like if someone was silly enough to try to stop the power of God. He can do things a kazzillion times better and faster and more amazingly than any human could ever dream of doing on Earth. Sometimes God gives a bit of His powerful Spirit, His words, His thoughts, His strength, His ideas, His determination, His miraculous ways of doing things to those on Earth who need it and ask Him for it.

If someone has believed that I, Jesus, your Saviour and redeemer, have come to Earth, and that I am their ticket to Heaven; if they've let Me be a part of their life, and they love Me, then it's like opening the door to Heaven. Not only can they come here to live forever in the wonderful world of God's love, but some of Heaven can come through that door also into their lives, here and now.

When those who believed in Me were ready to do the massive job of starting to tell the whole world the good news that I had finally come to Earth, and was offering salvation and forgiveness to all who would accept Me, they needed a real boost to get it all started.

Ever seen a rocket taking off into space? How much of a powerful boost does it need to shoot it off high and fast? It's engine on its own can't lift itself, it needs special power. It takes more than just its own engine. There are booster rockets, and huge amounts of fuel in tanks. That's a bit how it was when My powerful spirit filled up My first team of followers.

These ready and willing followers of Mine had the job of not blasting up but out, all over the world, telling people the tremendous news that I had at last come to save them, and telling them about My love, and how to live happily and help others come to know Me too. I told them where to go and what to do, to receive the very special gift that I had for them—A boost of power from the Spirit of God!

My instructions:

--The place to be: Jerusalem

--What to do: Wait

Then it happened one day—an amazing thing occurred while they were waiting at the place I told them to be in order to receive the powerful gift of My Spirit from Heavenn. "What's that sound?" they must have wondered, as they heard something that sounded like a mighty rushing

wind, filling the whole house where they all were waiting. Next thing they noticed there was fire. No, the house wasn't burning, but they were on-fire—in a way.

Remember Moses and the bush that had fire, a fire that was bright, but didn't burn things? Well, some of that fiery part of God's Spirit was seen on each one of them. They weren't just looking at the light of God, and talking to Him, as Moses had done. They each had a bit of that spiritual fire on them and God's Words were ready to burst out of their own mouths, to tell as many as they could the Good News they were commissioned to spread far and wide across the world.

Those that believed and did as I said to do, got this amazing spirit-charging, spirit empowering—better than the strongest battery in the world. Once they had been filled up with the very Spirit of God, they could literally do anything—anything I asked them to do. There was nothing that could stop them or hold them back. Not even the fact that the people they were to talk with spoke languages that my original followers had never learned. Was that a problem to God? Nope.

The many people visiting Jerusalem at that time needed to hear and know, right then, the Good News. They were visiting Jerusalem and would travel back to their home counties. If they had to wait to hear about Me, Jesus, till My disciples had learned to speak all their languages, they may have never had a chance to hear about Me. Think how wonderful it would be if all those who had travelled from far away, learned of Me, and then returned home to their country, spreading the Good News of My love and Salvation to those in their land!

So God's unstoppable, wonderful, powerful Spirit of love did what was impossible, what was needed right then, to make it possible. Without learning any of the other languages, all of a sudden, each one of My followers could speak in all sorts of languages, just like that! There were so many people who wanted to hear what Peter and the others had to say

about Me, and who decided to believe in My love and forgiveness! There were more than 3,000 just that one day who accepted My gift of eternal life, of forgiveness, of Salvation. Talk about power from Heaven at work!

God's Spirit can do some pretty amazing things! And those that want to be used by Him in wonderful ways, to bring God's love and message of salvation to others can ask Him to empower them with an extra dose of His Spirit, to do those amazing things. People who are too shy to talk with others, can find boldness. People who are weak can find strength. Sick people can get immediate healing and be a help to others then and there. People can do things they haven't ever learned before. All these things and so, so much more, the Spirit of God can do for those who ask for it. Why not pray now, and get a Spiritual top-up, too!

Together

Things were getting pretty exciting around Jerusalem now that the disciples were filled up with God's wonderful spirit and power to do the job of telling others about Me—Jesus! It wasn't just talking that was going on, amazing miracles and supernatural healings and astounding happenings were taking place. The original disciples as well as all the new folks who chose to also believe in My gift of love and salvation for mankind, were amazed at the kinds of things God was doing for them and with them.

People who had been sick or injured for years were healed in an instant—the second they believed in Me and My power to heal, through these messengers, My disciples. People were walking who'd never walked before. Others were seeing for the first time. Some could talk and praise God for the first time ever. More wonderful happenings were going on than could even be written about. Everyone was busy giving the news of God's love and Salvation to others, and seeing daily miracles happening.

This expanding team of believers lived as a big family, helping each other. They had learned to have teamwork and communication. They prayed together, sang together, ate together as friends. Each one shared their things and money with each other, so all had what they needed. Instead of each person and family keeping all their own things or property, they chose to share things instead, and sell the extra things, and the money from selling things wasn't just kept by those who sold them, it was willingly and kindly divided between everyone.

They lived and worked together. They loved each other and wanted to make sure that each one had what they needed. If everyone had large water pots, for example, or a weaving loom, or olive press, or wagons, and each one tried to keep them, it would get pretty squishy. It worked better to live closer to each other, instead of having to travel by foot or donkey for half of the day to talk and pray with each other. So those that wanted to, chose to just live all together. They didn't need so many of each thing—they just kept what was needed, and shared it together. The extra things they sold.

They focused together on the one goal they all had in mind of doing the job to tell the world about God's gift of love and passing on His words. It was their daily goal, and their life's vision, and every day more and more people wanted to believe as they did, and also join the team.

The disciples taught the new believers God's ways and His Word that they'd learned and heard, and the new things He was telling them through the voice of His Spirit then. Each new team member did their best to follow and do things in the way they were taught. It was new. It was different. It was a time for radical change. My coming to Earth brought that to mankind: a new way, a new gift, a new life, and a new reminder of God's love.

These fervent and dedicated disciples of mine were determined to do things God's way, and give up doing things in the old ways, and in the

ungodly ways that those around them in the world were living. They really didn't care what others were saying about them, or the ways others even tried to get them to stop preaching, teaching, and giving My message of love and life to the world. They had a job to do, and didn't let anything hold them back.

It was very tough, and still today those who try to follow in My footsteps and try to tell others about Me find it's hard to do. Not everyone is accepting of the truth. Not everyone likes to hear about it, which is very sad indeed. It's like wanting to give your most precious presents to some people you really loved, but couldn't go and see personally, so you passed it on to a friend to give it to them. But when your friend arrives there to give your gifts, some people won't believe it's really from you, or that you even are living at all. And to top it off they push your friend away and make fun of him, or forbid him to even talk to them. How would that make you feel? If it was someone you really loved and wanted to know how much you loved them, and you wanted to give your best gifts to, it would hurt you inside, right? You'd feel pretty sad. And how would you feel like treating your friend who was helping you to pass on the gift to them, but in the end was treated poorly at times? You'd feel like giving them even more wonderful rewards than before, because they were willing to give your gifts to those you loved. They loved you so much and wanted to do it for you, even though it was hard for them, and they encountered difficulties and sad times.

So, while My disciples, My messengers were on earth, doing just that job—passing on the gift of My Salvation to others—I was preparing a wonderful place for them in Heaven, just like I said I would. Tremendous rewards were being prepared for them.

It was a great and thrilling time, and many wonderful miracles were witnessed by them all. But it wasn't all just fun and games, and it had its difficulties, and people who didn't want to get that gift, and didn't want My messengers talking about Me either.

These wonderful men and woman and their children too, kept on going anyway. And those they taught told others, and they yet others. The years passed and more and more people have heard about Me—until even you have heard now! Isn't that amazing? Maybe you aren't living or doing just exactly the same things in the same way as they all originally did back then. But you can learn from them some things that you can do, to be a good follower of Me still today.

Can you share your things too? Can you help others? Can you tell others about Me? There's lots you can do, and should do, even if things are difficult at times. And I promise you that one day, when you come Up Here to Heaven, that you too will get a great reward for having lived in love, and for having told many about My gift of love to everyone. I'll have made ready the things you will most enjoy, I promise.

The Lame Man Walks

Why do people advertise? It's to attract you to get what they are offering, right? Well, the best kind of advertising comes from God, because the things He offers are for free, and they last a lot longer and are far better than anything you can find on Earth.

What does He offer? His eternal love, life with Him forever in a place of peace and beauty, forgiveness for wrong doings and joy in your heart. And why does He want you to have these things? Because He loves you so much, and wants you to be happy. He wants you to be a part of His family and to live with Him forever.

So, when it was time for the disciples to spread the news to many others all around, that I'd come to Earth, and there was forgiveness to all who believed, I wanted as many people as possible to hear about Me.

What's something that makes people really take notice? When God does something that is thought impossible, something that gives healing or protection or miraculous supply, doesn't that get people's attention? When He shows His love through giving someone something they've long wanted, it makes people want to listen and to believe in this God of love, right?

Many miracles were happening as the disciples were witnessing, teaching and preaching—for two reasons. For one, it helped to get people's attention and showed them something new and great was going on. Secondly, it helped to accomplish the main goal, that of not just providing immediate and physical healing, but healing of hearts, minds and spirits, helping to bring people's hearts close to God, and to gain faith in Me and My gift of love to all mankind.

There was a lame man—one of many around. He was someone that many people had seen, often. He was always there, sitting near the gate called "beautiful". He was there to collect alms or donations of those who had the privilege of being able to walk right in. He couldn't. Many people passed that way, so it was a good place to sit. He was then able to get food with the coins that were given to him.

One thing that My disciples weren't, was rich—in money that is. On the day when Peter and John went to the temple to pray, they didn't even have a single coin. Maybe that was good, as it made them realize they could give a lame man something far better. Instead of just rushing past him, or ignoring him, or apologizing that they had nothing to give, they stopped to talk with him.

"We don't have a single coin, but we'll give you what we have" they told the man. He may have wondered what it was—a coat, a piece of bread, some water? No, they were offering something better than anyone had dared to believe was possible to give to him.

“In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk” they told him. “Walk? Me? Walk?” He could have thought. But this lame man had had enough sitting around for a lifetime. He was ready to go! He didn’t waste time trying to figure out if it was possible or not, he simply believed, stood up and walked. In fact he was so thrilled he was jumping, leaping, just wildly happily going right in, at last, through that gate and into the temple together with Peter and John.

It was his faith in Me, Jesus, and the fact that it was God’s perfect timing that he got the healing and was granted his great desire to walk! It wasn’t just him that was amazed at what was going on. People flocked around to see him and to see for themselves if it really was true. Was the lame man really walking around now in the temple area? How could that be? They wondered.

Peter and John were quick to answer their questions, and used the opportunity to tell each one what was really going on. It wasn’t them, the disciples, that could have worked that miracle. They knew that! But they gave God the credit, and gave a good talk about Me, telling as many as were listening and looking and standing there in awe, the truth. This was the reason behind this event taking place—it was to draw people to Me, to bring people in to a closer relationship and friendship with Me, and to know of God’s love and forgiveness. The disciples were there for most of the day talking to those visiting the temple who wanted to hear what they had to say. Many listened that day, and many believed—over 5,000 people! What a great day it was.

Power, Protection & Perseverance

There were thousands who were listening to the disciples preach, after the lame man was healed. He was about 40 years old, so people had seen him unable to walk for a very long time. To all of a sudden get up and

walk was very surprising. It was causing quite a stir in the temple area. The day was nearly over, and some of the elders and priests in the temple thought they'd had enough of all this excitement, and that the disciples were telling so many the good news of how I, Jesus, had been raised from the dead, and was God's Son, alive and ready to forgive them, as I loved them.

This bothered those elders and men in charge of things at the temple, as they were afraid in their hearts about what they had been responsible for. When I was still on Earth and had been brought before them, before I gave My life for the sins of the world, they chose not to believe that I, Jesus, was God's Son, and chose to condemn Me to death. So now to hear all this talk saying that I was not only alive again, but I was now everywhere, working miracles all over the place, and I couldn't be stopped, was troubling for them. They didn't have the peace, the joy, and the forgiveness and salvation of God. Rather they chose to try and stop others from believing too, thinking this was the only solution.

These guys called the disciples to come and talk with them, and told them strictly not to ever tell anyone about Jesus any more. But rather than agreeing, the disciples took that opportunity to tell even those ones the truth, and spoke it with such boldness and clarity, that everyone listening then knew these men had been living with Me and had personally experienced what they were talking about.

Everyone who had seen the miracle of the lame man being healed were praising God and knew it was His power alone that did it. The crowd was on the side of the disciples. Those elders couldn't say or do much else but try to tell them to just stop talking about Me, Jesus. However, that wasn't going to work. "We can only say the things we saw and heard!" the disciples replied, before being allowed to leave and go home.

When they got back to the other believers they were staying with, what a story they had to tell! It was wonderful how many people were

wanting to believe and follow Me, too. Though, now there was the added problem of those who told them firmly to never talk about Me again. So what did they do? Did they use their day to quickly pack and leave town? No, there were too many people who were eager to hear the truth and needed them to stay there.

They chose to do the best thing of all. A fervent prayer meeting was held, asking God to fill them anew with the power of His Spirit—to make them even bolder and to witness the good news even more than ever! As they prayed, the whole building shook, and they all rejoiced at the power they felt coming from God into their hearts.

Every day they continued to do as they were commissioned to—speaking to people everywhere, telling them about Me, and multitudes of people were hearing about and believing the news of My love and salvation. The miracles of healing that were taking place were amazing! People would even bring their sick people into the street where they thought Peter was going to pass by, believing that if even just his shadow would fall on their sick ones, they would get healed. It was a thrilling time, and so many were joining the team of believers.

Did those who tried to stop their mission give up, and decide to believe too? Well, maybe some of them did, but there were those that thought they just needed to try harder instead to put an end to all this talk about Me, Jesus, and all the miracles I was still doing, even when I was invisible! A team of disciples were taken and placed in a prison room, to stay for the night, and would be brought the next morning before the priests to talk to them about stopping all this preaching. Guards were placed on the door, and it was locked too.

That wasn't God's plan! He wanted them in the temple, talking to the many people who were eager to hear. So that night an angel came and opened the doors and brought the disciples out, telling them to go back to the temple and talk to the waiting people in the morning. And

that's just what they did. As soon as it was morning time, they went right back again to the temple to preach and teach.

Can you imagine how astonished the elders and priests were to find that those they'd put in that place all closed up, had just vanished from that room, and were back again in the temple, talking boldly to all there?

One of the elders, Gamaliel, realized something new was happening, and that there just might be a chance that what all the disciples were saying was true—that I, Jesus, was indeed God's Son, and had risen again, and was the Saviour for all mankind. He counselled the other men to be careful, that they didn't want to be found to actually be trying to stop what God was doing.

So after warning the disciples roughly one more time to stop all this preaching, they let them go. And though it wasn't nice to be treated badly by those unbelievers, the disciples were so filled with the power of God's Spirit, and they loved Me so much, they left the place happy! They were free again to preach, and they knew a great reward was being prepared for them in Heaven, for having done what I told them to do, no matter how hard it was at times.

And did they stop? No way! They just kept on going, no matter what.

Seven Wise Helpers

Those who had met and lived with Me, Jesus, while I was on Earth had an important job to do. Besides telling many others about Me, praying for the sick, and teaching others about My ways, they had the job of recording and writing down the things I'd said, and passing on My new words to the people as well. They had a job of giving out My Words in many ways.

It wasn't as easy as pulling out a laptop and typing a note, like it is these days. Writing things down took a lot longer and much more effort back then. Many of my original disciples needed help too, to write, as they'd mostly done other jobs before I called them to follow Me. They hadn't spent a lot of time learning to write and read. So it took time and help to make letters, books, and scrolls in order to record My Words and to tell people what My new ways of doing things were—how to live in love.

If all these new followers were going to do things in My way they'd need to know what it was. So these original chosen disciples were very busy taking time to pray and talk with Me and listen to what My spirit wanted to tell them. They also took time explaining, writing, studying scriptures, teaching, preaching, and telling people how to live in My ways. However, there were other needs too. People needed to hear God's Words, but also children needed care, poor families needed food and clothes, and so forth. So since these few men couldn't do all those jobs as well, a plan was made.

A team of seven wise and trustworthy, full-of-faith men were chosen to help look after the new followers, to see that needs were being met. That gave the main leading disciples, who had walked with Me, time to continue their job of prayer and giving My Word to others in all the ways they could.

These seven men were called in to a meeting with the disciples to talk about this new job and responsibility. They prayed together to be filled with special power from My Spirit to do their new and important job. Just being good at a job or being smart or rich or knowing how to do things wasn't what was needed for this job. The ones who were picked weren't those who were the best looking or tallest, or who had the biggest muscles, or could run the fastest, or who had the most friends around them all the time. No, not at all.

In fact if you were to meet any of these great guys who were chosen you might wonder when looking at them for the first time, what was so great about them. There was nothing too amazing to be noticed, outwardly that is. God looks on the heart. There were thousands of people to choose from. What made these ones get the job? What is needed to do the best kind of work for the Lord?

Let's list some things that they had. They loved God more than anything else or anyone else. They gave their whole life and time and everything to helping others come to know Me, Jesus. They didn't care what people thought of them, or who told them not to talk about Me, they were as focused and determined to do the job as an Olympic runner is while racing.

They depended on prayer, not on their own strength. They prayed for the Holy Spirit to empower them—not just once, but with each new job. They knew they needed God's power to work through them and with them and for them each day, in all they did.

Those men were willing to do what was needed, for the good of all, even if it seemed less glamorous as some others were doing. It was a humble job, to serve and help others, and they had the loving humility to do it for Me. They didn't lose their focus either, and get too into the physical work that needed to be done, but took time to teach and preach and pray for others, whenever they could, wherever they were.

One of the men's names was Stephen, and he was a powerful and faithful giver of God's message to others. He was filled with the spirit of God and told as many people as he could about Me, Jesus. Not everyone was so thrilled about the message all these disciples were preaching about, but many did believe—even many priests at the temple!

Stephen was faithful to talk about Me and to share the truth his whole life. Some people tried to stop him from talking by spreading lies

about him, telling the elders of the temple that he was saying untrue and bad things, and that he should be stopped. But whoever believes on Me will never really be stopped all the way. People may seem to stop you for a while, but if you are telling the truth and living what you believe, even if they stop you, somehow it makes many others listen and believe what you were saying. So instead of just having only you telling others the truth, there are many more who take your place, when it's the time for you to go to your reward in Heaven.

So when some people tried to stop Stephen from telling them God's Word, it ended up being the most wonderful day of all for him. First of all it was great because many heard what he said with conviction, and some later on decided to give their life to preach about Me to even more people and in many other places than Stephen even could in that one city. Some people who heard and saw him speaking that day said his face shone like an angel, as God's Spirit was on him so brightly!

Secondly the day was great because while people were making things pretty difficult for him, he looked up right then and saw the most wonderful thing he'd ever seen. He got to see the Glory of God in Heaven, and Jesus standing beside Him. Wow! Can you imagine how marvellous that must have looked?

Jesus was calling him up to Heaven, telling him his job was done, and his reward was ready. He must have been so excited. Can you imagine if all of a sudden, while you are just going along doing your best one day, that the person you love most in all the world suddenly pops by for a visit and says they have the biggest surprise and gift for you than you've ever had in all your life?

But before he went to heaven he did one more thing. He said a prayer for those folks who weren't believing on Me yet. He prayed for God to forgive them for all the ways they had been making things rough for him. That showed what I truly came to do—I came to Earth to forgive each

one who would accept My gift of love and salvation. This prayer showed My true Spirit of love and why I came down from Heaven and lived, and then gave My life in the first place.

My love and truth was shown to all, and Stephen had a great time receiving commendation and reward—for living his life for Me, and giving his life for Me too. Then as a result of his witness and devotion to My mission, many others eventually came to know about Me too.

Things weren't easy for My followers, and there were those who really gave them a hard time. But they had the faith and joy knowing that I was watching them, and they too would come to Heaven with joy one day, and get great rewards for being faithful to do their job for Me, right until the last minute of their lives!

Maybe one day you can talk with these ones, when you get to Heaven too, and hear some of their amazing stories, and you can tell them some of yours! We can all party and rejoice because God's Word and love was spread to as many as was possible.

I'm so pleased every time I see someone make the right choice to help others come to know Me more. What can you do today to help others know that I love them, and want them to receive My gift of eternal life and be able to come to Heaven too? If you do your best, great will be your reward as well!

Philip's Amazing Trip

Some folks were making things pretty tough for the disciples to continue to preach around Jerusalem. However it made something good happen next. What do you think it compelled Jesus' followers to do? –To travel to new places and spread the good news of salvation to many others.

No matter who you are, or where you are, if you are telling others the truth about Me, Jesus, you're going to have some people who try to give you a hard time. That's just the way it is. It has been like that since I was on Earth, and it's like that today—and may even get harder as things get more and more ungodly in the world. But if I want you to spread the good news anyway, you'll not give up, and may find new ways to do it!

The disciples were traveling all around, here and there, and getting good results. Philip travelled to Samaria. They really needed to know the truth there, as someone who lived there had been spreading false ideas around. This man who wasn't a believer or follower of God tried to trick people into thinking that he was so great and powerful, rather than God, and many had thought it was true. It was distracting them from knowing about Me, Jesus.

Even though I wasn't there, visibly on Earth, I knew what was going on, and was very upset about it. I loved those people and wanted to set them free—free to know the truth, free to learn about Me and the way to Heaven, free from their sicknesses and diseases, free from all the trouble that the evil one was trying to cause. So Philip was sent to be My messenger. These people needed to see My power in action and to see how wonderful God was.

When Philip came to visit he demonstrated the power of God in marvellous ways. Many were healed and freed from the power of the devil. As a result they chose to believe on Me, Jesus instead. It was wonderful! Finally they heard the truth and were eager to believe. Even this false teacher chose to believe and be baptized too. Great!

Peter and John then came to visit Samaria, and told them about the gift of the Holy Spirit. They prayed with the people who had received and believed on Me, and they then received the Holy Spirit too! The place was getting changed for the better. It was a much nicer place to be, filled with more love and joy, and new believers.

When Philip's job there was done, his new assignment that he received in prayer from was to go towards the south on a road that led to a place called Gaza. It was a desert area. Philip knew I knew best, and chose to do whatever I asked him to do. So in the hot sun he walked, not seeing many folks around, wondering what the reason was for being right there at that time.

Philip then saw a chariot—a fancy one, with a very rich and important man riding in it. He was an Ethiopian man who worked for Queen Candace, and was in charge of all her treasure. “Go to him,” God told Philip. This at last was the reason for his needing to travel this way, on this road, right at this time.

Philip didn't hesitate and waste time or miss his opportunity. He quickly did just what was told him to do. As he neared the chariot he heard the man reading from the book of Isaiah—and it so happened to be just at the place in the book where Isaiah's prophecy is talking about Me, Jesus, giving My life for you!

Can you imagine? It was the perfect set up and opportunity to tell this important man about Me. Do you think I know what books you are reading? I not only knew what books were in this man's chariot, things he'd chosen to read to pass the time on his long travels, but what section he would be reading, and I had obedient, faithful Philip there at just the right time.

Did you know this happens all day long? I know where you are, what you are doing, and what will work out best for you today. If you take time as Philip did, to not only listen to instructions from God, but to do them, even if it's not something you'd normally choose to do, amazing things can take place. So many more miracles and answers to prayer would spring up throughout your day if you took more time to ask Me what I want you to be doing, and when and where.

So Philip was there right on time, and asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading about. He didn't understand it, and wanted to know more about it. He was reading from Isaiah 53. Philip was invited to then actually ride with this very important man, in his chariot, and explain the scripture passage to him.

The Ethiopian man was so thrilled to hear the news about Me, Jesus, and how this prophetic message had already come to pass. The prophecy had been fulfilled, and he could now be forgiven and find salvation through Me, Jesus! He was so eager that at the soonest sight of water, he ordered the chariot to stop and wanted to be baptized immediately!

However, it's not just about water, but about believing in your heart that I can save and forgive you. So Philip said he could be baptized, if he believed this truth he'd heard about Me with all his heart. The Ethiopian man replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Off the chariot and into the water both men went, and the man was baptized and full of joy! Then to add to the wonder of it all, as they walked out of the water Philip completely disappeared, right before his eyes. How this man praised God then! There were so many miracles and special things happening to him that day, and the joy of knowing about God's special gift of love was making him so happy!

Why do you think it was important that this man be told about Me? Everyone on Earth is very important to Me, and I love each one. That's why it's important that those who are in charge, who have the ability to tell many others in their country the truth about My love, come to know about Me.

Do you think this man forgot about what happened that day? Not in his life! He was brimming with joy and could share this good news with so many others—in the faraway places that he was traveling to. Having

something extra special happen, with Philip being suddenly taken—almost seeming like he was an angel or something—made the experience extra memorable. This man from Ethiopia was then responsible to share the news wherever he went, and the joy he felt at finding the way to salvation made him happy to do so.

Every minute is precious to Me, every minute in the life of those who are following Me on Earth and are actively giving My love and Words and gift of salvation to others. So when Philip had done his job, there was no need to have him there walking for hours down the dusty, somewhat deserted roads. I needed him elsewhere, where there were more cities and more populated areas.

In an instant he was transported to another place. He could get something to eat, and continue on his preaching mission in new places, without so much time and strength spent on travel—which took quite some time in those days. He went from city to city and told countless people about Me in the new place he suddenly appeared in. Pretty amazing!

Saul is Stopped—Paul Preaches

There was a man who made it his personal job to stop as many of My disciples as possible. That's all he thought about and all he did for a while, as he actually thought it was right. But he was so very wrong. His name was Saul.

God saw his determination. He could use that. If someone that committed to acting on what they believed was to be told the truth in a way they would understand it clearly, and believe it, just think what a great witness he would be! If they were someone who didn't let anyone stop them from doing what they felt was right, if they were on God's side, what a great job they could do!

So God had a plan. Saul thought he was just going on another one of his trips. He wanted to not only have the disciples stop telling others about Jesus in Jerusalem, but he wanted them stopped no matter where they had travelled to. So he was off on a trip to Damascus.

He had heard people talking about Jesus. In fact he heard all the things Stephen had been telling people. For some reason however, he just didn't believe it yet. He needed something else to show him the truth, and to get his attention and to get him on the right track.

As he was going along, suddenly a bright light, much brighter than anything he'd seen in his life, shone on him so powerfully he was immediately blinded and fell to the ground. Perhaps he'd known in his heart that something wasn't right about what he was doing, and this was just the thing he needed to get his heart to wake up and pay attention. A voice then spoke to him, asking why he's doing what he's doing!

Saul didn't know exactly who was talking so powerfully to him, but knew real clearly that whoever it was, is in charge of things, and is to be listened to, respected and obeyed promptly, no questions asked. I, Jesus, told Saul that it was Me—the very One He hadn't believed to be God's Son. He was ready to believe that I was real, and was interested in him and knew exactly what he was up to.

Ready to listen and to follow My instructions, Saul asked what to do next. He was now blind, he was lying in the dirt. The things he was mixed up about before were starting to become clear to him—that I was indeed who My disciples said I was: God's Son! I then told him the next clue of what to do. It was kind of like a treasure hunt. "Go to the city, and it will be told you what to do next."

Saul wasn't going to argue. He was now under My authority, and was willing to do anything. He could not ride into the city on a big horse, meeting all the important men of the Synagogue like he had planned. He

had to be led by the hand like a little child, humbly, blind, into a house in the city to rest.

For three days and nights he lay resting and waiting, thinking, praying and talking to God in his heart. He was given a vision, a picture in his mind of a man coming to pray for him and his sight being restored.

Ananias was living in that city, and was a man of prayer and a strong believer. He was that man whom God showed Saul was going to come and pray for him to be healed. I spoke with Ananias in a vision, telling him to go and pray for Saul, and told him exactly what street and in what house he was staying.

At first Ananias was surprised. Did I really mean Saul—as in the Saul who had come to that city to cause trouble? But I told Ananias about the change of plans, and how I personally talked with him as he travelled, in that shining light. Saul was now blind and ready to believe the truth, and he was chosen to be a great witness to many about Me, Jesus. He just needed to be prayed for.

So with faith in these words, Ananias took the step of courage and went to meet this man who none of the disciples wanted to have around, and who didn't want them around. It happened just as I said. There he was, this formerly proud, arrogant, unkind man, who was causing all kinds of difficulty for My followers, now weakly, meekly, lying on a bed, having not wanted to eat or drink for days, blind and praying for God to help him.

Ananias greeted him as if he was already a friend, and called him "Brother". Saul must have been surprised when further more Ananias told him that it was I, Jesus who sent him—the Jesus who appeared and talked with him as he travelled to Damascus.

"How did he know about that?" Saul must have wondered, as Ananias was speaking. It confirmed to him that something very special was going on. I wasn't just someone who lived on Earth before, that

others were talking about—I was a powerful God, who was still alive, and knew what was going on, and could talk with people and tell them things they didn't know. I was everywhere, and knew everything, and could do anything.

Ananias then laid his hands on Saul's eyes in prayers, just as I told him to do. Immediately his sight was restored. It seemed like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. He rose up, was baptized, and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Saul then ate and drank water, and got his strength back again. He then stayed with the disciples there for a while, talking to them, listening to them, and being one of them now too.

Now that he knew the truth, his job for Me and his focus was the same as My other followers—to tell others about Me and My gift of love and salvation. Saul was a new man in so many ways. His heart was filled with love for Me and for My disciples. His job and focus was now the complete opposite than it had been just days before. He was sorry for the way he had been acting before, and those that he'd caused so many problems for. Saul was often called "Paul" from then on. He was a new man and going to do new things with his life. He determined to be the best apostle he could possibly be, teaching and preaching in all the places that he could.

Paul went to the Synagogue to tell those there the truth about Me, Jesus, and how I was God's Son, and had come to Earth to save and help them, and gave My life for them, so they could have forgiveness and know My love. Because Paul knew the scriptures well, having had studied them before so much, he was able to be a powerful witness. He could quote and read the prophecies that were written about My coming, and show those he talked with how those messages had at last come to pass.

Once Paul was on the right side, on God's side, God could use his knowledge of scriptures, and his determination to do what he knew was

right, to tell many people about Me, Jesus. He used all his strength and time to do the best job he could.

Things weren't any easier for him, than they had been for the rest of the disciples. Some people weren't glad at all that he was now doing the opposite, and proclaiming strongly to others that I was indeed God's Son, the Christ, the Messiah they'd been waiting so long for. He was telling everyone that I had at last come, and there was forgiveness and life eternal for all who believed. Some tried to stop Paul and put an end to his new job for Me now, but he just kept on the move and travelled to new places and kept on going with what I called him to do. He never gave up, no matter how hard things got.

Nothing was easy for him, or any of My disciples back then, but the joy in Paul's heart of knowing Me, of receiving salvation, and of being able to share this wonderful gift with others made all the hardship and times of struggle worth it. Instead of a sad life ahead of him and only trouble from God, he would gain a wonderful reward that was being prepared for him, as he carried on doing his best, to tell others about Me, in all the ways he could.

Arise

Peter was on the go, traveling to as many towns and cities as he could, encouraging the new teams of My disciples, and telling many people about Jesus. When he came to a place called Lydda he met a man that had been in bed for eight years, sick and unable to get up. His family and friends had to do everything for him, and he couldn't join in on so many activities.

Can you imagine what that must have been like? Put yourself in his place for a moment. How old are you right now, and how old will you be in eight years? What if today you were stuck in bed, and unable to get

up on your own until that birthday, eight years from now? It'd be pretty tough, right? It would be hard for you, and for your family too. What things would you miss out on being able to do?

You know from reading the story that eventually he did get healed. For him, however, he didn't know it was only going to be for a certain amount of time. He thought, every day, that it would go on for the rest of his life—and so did everyone else. Then Peter showed up, one wonderful and memorable day. He said to Aeneas, “Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed.”

A thrill of excitement surged through his whole being. *Healed, now?! Just get up and make my bed? I believe it!* Aeneas thought, and did it. He got up! From that moment on he was completely well again!

News spread of this amazing healing around the whole city and to nearby places as well. All who were in Lydda and Saron heard and saw this miracle, something thought to be completely impossible. Then the greatest thing happened next! The effect of Aeneas' healing was that everyone who heard and saw it chose to believe on Me, Jesus! That was an even greater, and more miraculous occurrence. For a heart to change, and to accept My love, and to believe in My power, and to want to follow in My ways, is even a greater happening than merely someone's body being able to move.

When people are bound in sin, that means sad and unable to be set free from the sorrows that their wrong doings are causing, and they are constantly worried about what will happen as a result of their mistakes and sins, it's like they are as immobile as Aeneas.

You can't freely move in your spirit, in your heart, and be free from the things that hold you back from following in God's way. This whole city of Lydda was immobile in spirit, sick with not only the diseases of their bodies, but also of heart and spirit and mind, and so very sad.

When God’s light and love from Heaven shone into their lives, and it was manifested or shown and made known to all, it was a great event in each one’s life. Everyone chose to accept the freedom and forgiveness from sins that I came to Earth to bring. Each one was then set free to move with My spirit, to move with the motives of love and do as I wanted them to—and to get moving telling others about Me too. This brought so much more joy in their life, and better health for their spirit too—just like movement and exercise does for our bodies, and how great it was for Aeneas to get on the go!

My disciple John wrote: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21) So it’s important to not only hear about Me and to know the truth and about My love, but to be on the go, too, doing what I said to do.

There was another place called Joppa, that was not too far away from where Peter was at that time. One day some messengers came from there to Peter, with an urgent request, to please come immediately back with them, as there was a woman who needed prayer and healing right away.

A kind woman, a disciple, called Tabitha (or also called Dorcus), had done so much for others. She was one of those who didn’t just hear My words and know what I said about loving others, caring for people, but she was a doer! She spent all her time and strength doing as much as she possibly could to help others. Back then most needed items had to be handmade. There were no second-hand shops filled with clothes. If a poor family needed coats for the cold weather, they had to be made, and the materials for creating them had to be gathered and prepared.

Tabitha knew how to sew and weave, and made it one of her projects to show My love to others by making coats and clothes for those who didn’t have others to help them, and who were poor. She was caring

for all, and helped in many ways. She made that her work and her life's goal, to give loving help to as many as possible. Many people were touched by her care, and the way she showed her love for Me by doing kind deeds and giving to and helping others.

She became very sick at that time, when Peter happened to be close by. It seemed to all that that was going to be her last day on Earth. When Peter heard their desperate plea to come and pray for Tabitha, he agreed to go with them, right away.

As he arrived in the house where Tabitha was, there were lots of people there, weeping and so very sad. She had passed away. They showed Peter some of the clothes that she made, and told of how kind she was to all. Tabitha was very missed, and loved by all.

Sometimes it's good to think about that—when it's your time to leave Earth, and go to see Jesus at last, what will you be remembered for? Believe me, if your only goals in life included a long list that revolved around yourself, and only making yourself happy and having all that you could gather for yourself, you won't be remembered for anything really great. If you choose instead to do all you can for Me—helping Me complete My goal list, since I'm not there in body anymore and need your help—you'll make a good impact on all who know you, and your welcome up Here in Heaven will be spectacular.

What things are on My “get done” list? Well, why don't we talk it over today, and I can give you some hints. Just say, “Jesus, how can I help You today? I love you and want to make You happy.” I can give you some ideas that are easy to do, and maybe a few not so easy to do but need to be done just the same. And as you pray for My help you'll be able to check a few things off the list, and be given My great appreciation for all you've done to help Me, even though it wasn't always easy.

So Tabitha did that, she did what I wanted her to do, and was living to give My love and care to others. When it seemed like she was too sick, and like her life had ended, they laid her in a bed upstairs in the house. Peter was shown into the room, and knelt down to pray for her healing, and to be given life once again. And then what did he do? He had faith that I had heard, and turned to the woman and said, “Tabitha arise”.

Immediately she opened her eyes and saw Peter, who took her by the hand, and helped her to stand up. Peter brought her to the disciples, alive and well. The joy and wonder they felt was more than they could contain. That did more to spread the news about Me, Jesus, than anything had up until then. The disciples went telling everyone about it. Everyone in Joppa heard about it, and many turned their hearts towards Me as a result. Peter stayed there then for quite a while, as there were so many people eager to know more about Me and to learn of My ways.

Tabitha’s heart’s wish and prayers were at last fulfilled. She loved Me so much and wished that everyone in her city could come to know about Me. She didn’t just want to do kind deeds herself, she wanted everyone to know God’s love in their hearts, and to start spreading that love around too. She wanted the whole town to catch on, and get My love flowing all around. Then it finally happened! It happened differently, however, than she had thought it would. It took her first of all giving and showing love and kindness all that she could, and then the miracle of My healing power, being told all around in the city by My disciples.

It took her being willing to go through an experience that at first seemed like a terrible defeat, rather than a victory. Instead of being able to help others, she became very ill and unable to do anything for a while, and her life was taken, temporarily. It took her giving until the end of her life, so that many others would know about Me. But when she was granted life again, and she rose up she was so glad to see an even greater miracle begin to take place.

She got to see the change that came about in that city, and to know how many people were not only getting to see My love in action through her kind deeds, but to know My love in their hearts and lives personally, and being My followers, too. Are you giving all you can for Me, today? You won't be disappointed at the results that come eventually, and will be thrilled when you receive your personal reward from Me.

Cornelius

Have you ever had a funny dream about food, and woke to find you were actually really hungry? Sometimes dreams come as a result of what you are feeling, but many times they can be Me, Jesus, trying to tell you something. Well, Peter was actually very hungry, but the food wasn't yet ready. He decided to lie down while he waited. However, the dream or vision that he had wasn't just some odd happening. God gave him a special message—a message that would have a very large effect on all the disciples who were trying to spread the news about Me to others.

In the dream or vision or video that I showed Peter in his mind and spirit there was a large type of sheet, filled with all kinds of things that Peter had been taught all his life to never eat—things that were on the “unclean” meat list as far as what foods to use for cooking. I spoke to Peter and told him to eat them. Peter replied that he couldn't, that he wouldn't, and he'd never done so in his life. He'd always stuck to the rules of what to eat and what not to. I replied to Peter that whatever God makes clean is clean for sure. I then showed him this same scene and message three times in a row. Why three times? Every part of the dream was for a reason, and would make good sense as soon as Peter woke up.

“Is Simon Peter here?” Some men were downstairs inquiring about him. There were three men who had come to find Peter right away. When Peter saw who they were, he understood more what that mysterious

vision and message meant. See, so far the disciples had only been telling the news about My gift of salvation to a certain kind of people—to the Jewish people, the descendants of Jacob, those who had left Egypt, those who followed the 10 commandments and all the other many rules that governed their lives, that were passed on to them from God through Moses.

The men who had arrived to speak with Peter were of another nationality and culture, though they too believed in God. Through that vision Peter was being prepared to do something new. He was to go with them, and talk with them about Me, Jesus. It was a very new idea.

When Peter heard their story, and what brought them to the house he was staying in, he had full confidence to do what I seemed to be leading him to. They told him of the man they worked for, Cornelius, and about the amazing event that had happened just the day before.

Cornelius loved God, but didn't know about Me, Jesus—yet. He would pray often, and all that were in his house too. He would give gifts to the poor and help others all he could. He was a good man. Being good and trying to do the best you can is great, and you should do that, but there is more that is needed if you want to go to Heaven, and be called one of God's sons (and daughters). He and all that were in his house needed to hear about Me, and My gift of salvation and forgiveness.

The time was right for many others to begin to hear about Me—not just those of the Jewish faith. So, I chose this faithful man, who loved God above all things, who I knew would obey what I said, to be the one to get the ball rolling.

As Cornelius was praying the day before, a brightly dressed angel appeared to him and told him a very specific and clear message. The angel told Cornelius about Peter, and said exactly where he was living. The

message was that Cornelius needed to speak with Peter, who would tell him what he was supposed to be doing.

It was a bit like a treasure hunt. The first clue was the name and place where someone was staying. The next clue would be found out then. “There’s something I’m supposed to be doing... I wonder what it is?” Cornelius must have thought. He always wanted to be doing everything that God wanted him to.

No time was lost. He wanted to obey right away, and know right away what this was all about. Immediately he told some of his helpers to ride to Joppa, to the house of a man called “Simon the Tanner” and to ask about a man called Peter. They were to ask Peter to come to Cornelius’ house, and to speak with them there.

Peter, whose heart and mind had been prepared for this encounter, agreed. After giving the messengers a place to stay for the night, Peter and some other disciples from Joppa travelled back with them the next morning.

There were no phones for the team to tell Cornelius that it was true, that a man called Peter was at that very house, and was coming home with them now. He just had to wait, hope, and see what was going to happen next. As Cornelius saw his helpers approaching, with several others, he knew it was Peter’s team. Quickly Cornelius called together his family and closest friends to also be in the room to hear whatever the special message was going to be.

Cornelius thought Peter must be an extra special and important man, and he went out to greet him by falling down at his feet and worshiping him. Peter wasn’t Me, Jesus, but only My messenger, so he told Cornelius to get up, assuring him that he was just a man. They chatted as they entered the house, and Peter saw that there was quite a gathering of people, all eagerly waiting for him to speak to them. They had faith that Peter was

going to give them the next clue in their treasure hunt of trying to find God’s will for their lives.

It’s a joy to have eager and willing listeners when you have something important to say, isn’t it? So Peter began talking with them all, starting by explaining why he came so quickly there—it was God who told him to, through the vision or dream that he’d had. Cornelius and the others were so glad that he had come, and they readily listened and believed all that Peter then shared with them—the story of the gift of salvation, about Me, Jesus, and how they too could be saved.

An unexpected occurrence then took place, to Peter and the other disciple’s surprise. God all of a sudden poured out His Spirit on each one there who was listening, just as He had done for the disciples when they were gathered and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was a wonderful and exciting meeting. Everyone was so happy! They all were then baptized, and became believers. What an amazing few days it had been. It had all happened so quickly, because each of these men were taking the time to pray each day, and were ready to do whatever God asked them to do.

This was a tremendous event—that those who were not meant to be mingled with, according to the Jewish law, were being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and becoming disciples. Some of the disciples who heard about it wondered what was going on. When Peter met them he explained the whole story, and they understood that it was something new God was doing—and they were to follow in this new way too, speaking with all kinds of people about Me, Jesus! After all, I did say, to go into all the world, preaching the Gospel to “every creature” –that does sound like all types of people, doesn’t it? Many more were able to receive the good news and joy of salvation as a result of this event, and the disciples’ obedience to this new way I was leading them.

Peter's Adventure

Peter woke with a start! Something or someone had tapped him firmly. He opened his eyes, and saw to his surprise an angel standing there. “I must be dreaming” he thought, “and it’s such a nice dream”.

What happened next to him was completely impossible to occur in ordinary life—so it had to be a dream, he guessed. This heavenly messenger was instructing Peter, and he did what he was told to do.

“Quickly now, put on your sandals, get on your coat and come with me.”

Peter wasn’t sleeping in his house, or even out under a tree. He had been placed in a secure location—jail. For what? For obeying God. By whom? –The king. Too bad that those in charge at that time didn’t realize who was really the king of their lives. Instead of trying to please those who didn’t like what the disciples were doing, and how they were preaching, the king ought to have been begging Peter and the others to talk to him about Me, Jesus, and to tell him the way to Heaven, and the way of forgiveness and salvation.

As soon as people get their eyes only on those around them, and only want to do what is pleasing and admired by humans, that’s when things get worse on Earth. For some reason, because there is so much around that is in opposition to God and to His ways, it takes great effort and determination to go in God’s way. Those who had chosen to follow in My ways, and to do what I asked them to do, regardless of the trouble it seemed to cause them with those who tried to stop them, just kept on going, and got to see great miracles of God’s help and power too!

Peter got to experience it that Easter weekend. King Herod wanted to wait to talk to Peter till after the special weekend that it was for the Jewish people—which happened to also be the same time of year

that I gave My life for all, and rose again. Because My disciples had extra power and miracles were being done through them by the power of God, the king knew he had to be very careful. If he didn't want Peter to get away and to start preaching again, he'd need to make sure to put him in the most secure location, guarded by many guards, behind locked doors.

No one can stop God's plan or God's people, if He wants something else to be happening. Everyone has the ability to choose what to do, and people can make the wrong choices and cause difficulty to God's messengers. God's plan, however, will never be totally ruined. No matter what happens or what people try to do, with God on your side and with the power of prayer, anything can change for the better, in God's way, and in God's time.

God doesn't have a problem doing the impossible, especially when people were praying as much as all the disciples were, for Peter to be set free again.

Peter wasn't meant to be in there, nor to talk with the king, who wasn't ready to listen to what Peter could have been telling him about. So when the time was right, an angel was sent to escort him out, safely, quickly, and completely undetected. The angel woke him, told him to get up, put his shoes and coat on, and to follow him.

The final large iron door opened all by itself as the angel walked Peter out of there. They walked on down the street a while, then the angel left. At that point Peter realized, wonderfully, that it was not merely a dream after all. It was an amazing miracle that had really occurred! Quickly he made his way to a house where disciples were gathered together, praying desperately for him to be released.

When you pray, do you expect the answer? Or are you actually surprised if it happens? Well, if it's right and good for you, and what God wants you to be praying for, then you can have faith that it will happen—

and not be too shocked when the answer comes! You can be jubilant, happy, grateful, thankful and praise God! But to be completely surprised that it happened at all shows you might not have realized how powerful God is, and able to do absolutely anything that is within His will.

When Peter arrived at the house he knocked, and waited, and knocked, and waited, and knocked, and waited. He nearly had to beg to be let in! The young lady who went to see who was at the door saw it was Peter—or at least that it looked like him. She got all excited and couldn't believe her eyes! Rather than letting him in, she ran back to tell all the others who had been praying nearly non-stop for him.

Then, as the knocking continued on in the background, those in the house told Rhoda, the young lady, that she must be crazy! That Peter couldn't possibly be at the door. Can you imagine it? Here's Peter, who needs to be let in for his own safekeeping, having to make all this noise just to get people to believe that their prayers have been answered, then and there!

Finally at long last, the door is opened and Peter is let inside. He shares the wonderful account of the angel, and just how God chose to answer their prayers and free him to teach and preach again. With eagerness they all listen, and praise God together for the great miracle!

Peter then bids them farewell, and journeys on to continue his important job—a job that has made it a reality that here and now, you today, can hear the story too, of Me and My love for you, and My own journey to Earth. I brought the original message, and gift, and those who I commissioned to spread the news and offer the gift of My salvation to others, did so, and did it well. And that's why you today have heard about it. Will others know, as a result of your determination, to tell many about Me, too?

Paul's Adventures

Paul had quite an adventurous, difficult, and amazing time travelling around, and preaching to all that he could about Me, Jesus. His travels took him many places, and he used all kinds of transportation and ways of getting around.

Nothing stopped him from reaching his goal—to give his life and time, every bit of it that he could, to tell as many people as he could about the gift of Salvation, and to let people know that their Messiah, their Saviour, had at last come.

It was not an easy or comfortable life, many dangers and troubles came his way, but as he wrote, “none of these things move me” (Acts 20:24). He didn't let anything move him away from what he had decided to do, and knew to be God's will and plan for his life—his God-given job. If he was whole-hearted before his change, trying as hard as he could to stop My disciples, well now, with his priorities adjusted and made right, with the truth known, and with the Holy Spirit helping him, he was even more committed and determined to “finish his course” as a disciple. He said:

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” [Acts 20:24]

He knew there were rewards going to be given out by Me to the faithful ones, those who kept on going, and did what I commissioned and asked them to do with their lives. Rewards would be given for those who chose My will for their lives, for those who told others about Me, for those who showed love and kindness and cared for others, for those who faithfully kept on doing, one day at a time, the jobs that needed to be

done—whatever it was that I wanted them to be doing—and not giving up.

Paul wanted to win the race, to finish, and to get a gold-medal-level prize. You'd do well to gain encouragement from the life of Paul to keep on going, no matter what comes your way. To keep on going and doing what? Well, that depends on who you are, where you are, and what the need is for you to be doing.

Are you young still, and have lots to learn? Paul was able to talk to many different types of people, in several languages, and share the Old Testament scriptures with them, helping to prove that I was truly their Messiah. How was he able to do that? He had to study, lots, when he was younger. It was different than what you have available today. There were no CDs to learn from, or audios to listen to, or neat internet sites, or documentaries to watch or videos or computers that could speed learning for him. There weren't even books as you have today!

There were people who knew the things that he needed to learn, and he focused when they tried to teach him, he asked questions, he applied himself, he did the best he could with what he had. He set goals, little goals, and bigger ones too. He didn't let other things distract him from learning what he needed to learn. Maybe it seemed to be unnecessary at times, or that all the time he spent learning things wasn't put to good use, right then and there. When he was grown, however, he was able to use those skills and knowledge, and that's when it paid off.

Something that helped Paul a lot was what he learned about countries and geography, and places to go. He learned to speak a few different languages so he could talk with people in the different places he travelled to. He learned the Bible—as much as they had then. There was no “New Testament”, as he was one of the ones to help write it. Of course he had to know how to read and write so that he could do it, or instruct others to help him do it.

Are you using your time to focus on learning the things that will most help you as you are older? What is something you most want to learn how to do? Maybe it's something that I've put in your heart to learn.

If you can use your spare time doing things that will really benefit you later on, then it'll be like going uphill in a car, rather than on a bicycle. There's a difference, isn't there? What is it? One takes far more effort than the other, right? So if you learn the right kinds of things today, and use this time when you are younger and it's easy to learn things and you have the time and chance to do them, it'll make things so much better for you when you are older.

There are so many things I can help you do when you learn different skills: Can you sew? That can be used to help others in many ways. Can you read well? Then you can teach others the same, and teach yourself many new things from being able to study and read about them yourself. Can you invent and problem solve? Try thinking up simple solutions to the difficulties you face today, and ask Me for ideas. I'll always help you to improve a situation if you give Me a chance to help, and give yourself some time to think and pray about things.

Can you draw pictures or play music? These can both be used to tell others the good news in fun, attractive ways. There are lots of people who are making noise with instruments and with their voices, but are they helping to change things for the better? Can you? Will you? There are tons of books in the world, with countless pictures drawn. Are they helping to bring love, joy, peace, inspiration, faith and a glimpse of heaven into people's lives? Will yours?

Do you know some verses by heart from the Bible? See how many you can learn in one day. I think it will surprise you to see how fast you can memorize verses. It will be much easier and faster for you now than it will be when you get older. Set a goal for yourself and have fun "hiding the word in your heart" as king David said. (Psalm 119:11)

Are you good at noticing when someone around you needs something? It's good to have your focus on the needs of others. It's a great distraction from those other thoughts and activities that get you down, when you are too involved in thinking about yourself only. Try today to see how you can step out and help someone else, even in a small and simple way. Even a smile is a help, or perhaps giving your time to cheer up your younger brother or sister.

Sometimes not doing something is a great help, like not talking loudly when others are resting, or not saying something that comes to mind if it's not something good and helpful or kind and true.

Even learning something like soccer or cricket can be a useful skill. Besides the benefits of the exercise, it helps you learn to work together as a team with others, and to get along with different kinds of people, and to appreciate how each one adds to the game, and you need each one on the team.

Can you cook yet? Well, the first place to start is to make sure to wash your hands before you eat, and to help clear your dish at the end of the meal. Starting with cleanliness is the best place to start, as cooks that aren't clean might cause the people who eat their food to get sick.

How can cooking help you later in life? Well, that's easy to see! You'll need to eat for the rest of your life. If you know how to take care of these needs of your body, you'll be able to make sure you are in good working order, making good healthful foods for yourself, and not just relying on others to always do it. That way you can make sure what you are eating is really what will keep you going strong. And not just you only, but your children, or family, or others who visit you, or who you visit.

A meal can be a wonderful way to meet with friends, and to share God's love and words with others. Everyone always wants and needs food. Learning to cook helps you be able to speak with people who you are

cooking for, and eating with, giving you an opportunity to tell them about Me or to encourage them in some way—even just through being a friend that they can sit and talk with.

Paul was able to use every bit of what he'd learned when young, while traveling for years, telling as many people as he could about Me, Jesus. So it helped make it easier in some ways. It was still pretty tough in other ways, however, but at least he had some skills to help him out.

Here are a few of the things that happened in the life of Paul the apostle:

--Paul had several opportunities to speak with kings, rulers, deputies, and those in charge. He spoke with boldness and clarity, winning their favour, and helping many to know the good news and way of salvation, both the rulers themselves, as well as those in their countries as a result.

--He often had to travel by ship, and the storms encountered were very difficult, some lasting for weeks, while being rocked around in a boat, hardly able to even eat, or see the sunshine. He was shipwrecked too, but all aboard the ship were able to swim to the nearby island and were saved. It was an unexpected place to visit, but since their ship couldn't be used any more, it gave him the chance to talk with all who lived there about Me, Jesus.

--He was bitten by a poisonous snake, and not harmed at all. Those who knew what normally happened were very amazed to see that Paul was completely fine, and it made them all take note of what Paul explained to them about God's power, and Me, Jesus.

--He lived through an earthquake, which shook the place he was being held in securely. It ended up freeing him and his partner. But rather than running off, he took the opportunity to speak with the prison guard and his whole family about Me.

--He was a tent maker, and at times worked with others to make tents, while still preaching to as many as he could, not forgetting his real job—to spread the good news to all around.

--He had a special gift of healing, and many were healed through Paul's prayers and the miracles done by My power through him. There was a time when people would bring to Paul even just a piece of cloth or a handkerchief from a sick person, for him to touch, and they'd be made well. They had such faith in My healing power and the prayers of Paul.

--He wrote many books and letters to the groups of believers all throughout the country and surrounding area. He didn't just talk to them once as he travelled and passed through if there was a way he could visit again or send another disciple to visit to encourage them. He also sent letters filled with God's Words and instructions to help them grow in faith and learn more about My way.

--He often felt alone or had large groups of people speaking against him and wishing to stop him. Paul didn't let that stop him, and God always rescued him and gave him new opportunities to spread the good news as he carried on.

--There were several years that he wasn't permitted to travel, and had to stay in one house, guarded. That gave him time to write letters, and to speak with rulers and governors who came to visit him, wanting to hear about what he had to say, and the way to salvation.

--He knew what it was like to be hungry, cold, sick, and in want. But he was more interested in making Me happy, and gaining Heavenly rewards and riches, than just being comfortable and having all he'd need on Earth.

There have been many others—too many to count or to mention here—who have lived their lives, or most of their lives, telling the Good News that I came to Earth to bring: My love for everyone, and My offer of forgiveness and Salvation to all who would believe. Each one will be wonderfully rewarded. And so will you, as you choose to do your best day-by-day for Me and for what you know in your heart to be right and according to My Word in the Bible. This life here now is not the end, but rather just a learning station, a grade in the big life you will live, forever. Learn what you can, love in all the ways you can, and do what you can, and I'll be so pleased—and so will you, too, as you find out what I have planned for you. Rewards are awaiting the faithful ones, I promise!

Heaven

Here's the beautiful ending—or rather the new beginning!

Can you count the tears you've cried? God did. Do you remember each time you got hurt, or that someone else hurt you? God saw and cares, and felt the hurt too, because He loves you like His own child. When a parent really cares for their children, they practically feel each sorrow and joy, hurt and sickness, and emotion along with their child. Isn't that amazing? They understand and care, and want to do all they can to make things the best they can for their child.

When I, Jesus, came to Earth, as a human, that was one of the goals—to go through that experience in order to understand you better, to feel what it's like, to know what you need, and how things are for you on Earth. I know what is fun for you, and what makes you feel happy and inspired, and what things you'd rather not have, and what is difficult for you and all who are on Earth.

I know what it feels like to be hungry, thirsty and tired. I know how nice a good meal feels after a long journey. I know how great it is to see a

friend after a long while and finally be able to talk together again. I know what things make you feel just great, and what makes you feel special and loved. I know what things are wonderful to look at, or hear, or feel or experience. And best of all, I know how to create amazing things.

So now imagine a guy—Me—who knows just what kind of things are thought of as the most amazing, terrific, awesome, marvellous and stupendous by those on Earth, and who can also create such things and places and experiences even far better than you've ever imagined. If you've got Me as your friend, I can let you come and stay with Me in My amazing world of love and peace and joy and plenty and incredible experiences and far-out thrills.

This Heavenly place isn't just an imaginary land, but really exists, and the best part is that you get to be there, when the time is right. Cool, huh? Maybe not today, or tomorrow, but when I've got your special nook in Heaven ready, then I'll call for you, okay? Can you be patient, and wait till that time? And while you are waiting, do you want to help Me make and build your place in Heaven? How can you, while you are still on Earth? Well, let me give you some clues.

When you go to the store or market you give money and then get what it is that you need, right? Or when a house is being built, the owner of the land pays the workmen to construct it, as well as gets all the supplies needed to put it together.

So how can you help to build your mansion and stock up rewards in Heaven? Imagine that there is a Heavenly way to pay—but it's nothing at all like what you have on Earth. The money on earth is dirty and makes people who are only interested in it sad and do bad things. It can make people be selfish and greedy and not help others like I would really want them to. So don't get our mind or heart set on getting only riches and things for yourself on Earth—that is the first step.

If God sees you caring more about others than about acquiring more things or money for yourself and your own comfort, that is one great way to supply Me with building material for your place in Heaven, and you can be sure it will be more wonderful than you could ever have made for yourself on Earth. Giving love and caring about others makes your rewards in Heaven really start to take shape and look and be fabulous!

Another way to send up some building materials is through having faith—faith that God will take care of you, faith to do what God asks you to do while on Earth, faith to believe what God’s Word says is true. – Trusting and believing in the truth of God’s love and care, and not getting turned away by those who speak the untruths and lies and try to pull you into only thinking and doing things in the way of the world.

Faith pleases God very much—because it shows Him that you know He’s there and cares and loves you. When someone you love knows that you are their friend, it makes you happy, right? It shows you that they trust that you really do love them.

Good friendship is made strong through the friends knowing that they love and care about each other. That’s the way it is with Me too. I am happy when you demonstrate to Me that you know I love you, and you prove it through trusting that I am always there with you, and you don’t worry or wonder if I am going to answer your prayers. You expect and know that He’ll take good care of you, or work out for the best the things that are hard for you, and make it all right again.

Here is another example that might give you an idea of what it means to have faith. What if every year on your birthday your parents or a friend or brother or sister always tried to do something that was special for you—an outing or a snack or a present. Year after year they always remembered, and it was always something you enjoyed. What if, one year, instead of looking forward to your birthday, and the special treat

they would give you, you got all worried and thought, “I’m sure they won’t do anything nice for me this year...I think they’ll even forget that I have a birthday at all.” How would your friend or parents or brother or sister feel? It would make them feel you’ve forgotten that they’ve always remembered it before, and the whole point of them giving you treats and gifts was lost—they wanted you to know that they love you. You worrying about it, forgetting all the good things they’ve done, would make them feel sad. When you think they don’t care, it shows you don’t trust their love is true. So that’s what it’s like with God, and His friends—you and those who believe and have received Me, Jesus, as your Saviour.

Keep being thanking for all the many ways God’s love is shown to you, and trust that He will continue to love and care for you. I want to be a close friend to you, and it makes Me so glad when you know that I am near and that I will take good care of you. And the closer a friend you are to Me, the more fun you’ll have, and the more gifts I’ll give you as well!

Speaking of gifts, and the huge gift of Heaven that is being prepared for you, how would you like to hear how My disciple John described it when I allowed him to see a glimpse of it, while still on Earth? It was written down and is found in the very last book of the Bible.

Have you ever noticed how some people really like diamonds, and think they are special? They are pretty and very durable and when light shines on them they are very attractive. People put them in jewellery so they can be looked at often. Diamonds are rare to find, and are very precious!

Well, when the apostle John was shown a vision of this marvellous Heavenly city he described it as beautiful as a crystal clear huge diamond! He said it was so very beautiful! And it was clear, bright gold! Think of some of the cities in the world today—the smog, the smoke, the dirt, the sewage, the pollution, the noisy traffic and confusion. Then now think about a city that is made of pure and clear gold, like glass, all shining and

bright. The walls made of jewels, gems and precious stones, the streets made of gold and are sparkling clean. A place where there's no problem trying to travel around from one place to the next, and you don't have to wait for a bus or train, or even pay a fair. You can fly where you want, if you like, or travel in other ways yet to be discovered by you when you get there.

John described the wall around the city, and told of its 12 layers made of precious stones and jewel. Imagine something like a beautiful emerald or amethyst, or sapphire, or diamond being longer and bigger than you can even see with your normal eyes today, if you were standing right up close to it. That's a pretty big jewel! Now imagine a pearl so tall you can't see the top of it. Around the city were 12 gates, not made of iron, wood, or even glass, but rather pearl! Can you imagine a more lovely building material to make a gate out of? How gorgeous.

There is no palace on Earth built for a king or queen that has been made that is even close to how beautiful God's living place is. And the amazing thing is that you get to have permission to live there too! All who love God and follow God's way, and have accepted Me, Jesus, into their lives and received My forgiveness, get to be there—forever! You'll be a permanent resident of God's Heavenly city. You won't need a passport—just Me, I'm the passport. Do you have Me with you, and in your heart and life? Have you prayed to receive My forgiveness and love? Then that's your passport and ticket to be in the most amazing place ever. You won't have to leave, unless you want to go for an exploring mission around the galaxies. Maybe I can take you for a guided tour, if you like. How's that for a “day in town”?—A trip through the universe.

You'll always be a citizen of Heaven, and can go and stay freely as you wish. Inside there is no need for the sun or moon to shine. The light from God is beautiful and bright enough to light the whole city in the loveliest way. And there is no night, just beauty and fun and inspiration.

And remember that special tree in the garden of Eden—the good one, the tree of life? The one that Adam and Eve and everyone else on Earth weren't permitted to eat from, after their choice to disobey and to allow sin into the world? Well, where did it go? You'll find the Tree of Life growing abundantly in Heaven, with all kinds of fruits on it, 12 different kinds! Fun! There will be something for everyone, and all the varied preferences of tastes.

The river of life also flows from God and through the city. You've never seen a river as clear and refreshing and sparkling as the flowing waters in the River of Life in Heaven! You can swim in it, sail on it, play in it, dive in it, picnic by it while tasting the treats from the Tree of Life. It will feel like Heaven—because it is! It will feel so good, so relaxing, so energizing, so thrilling, so amazing.

This is just the tiniest peek into what the Heavenly City is like. The full reality of it still waits to be discovered by you, when you get there! It will be more wonderful than you can imagine. It will be filled with love and Godliness. The citizens of Heaven—you and your friends, and all who have followed and loved Me, Jesus—will not live as some do in the world today, that are causing sadness and trouble. People in Heaven will take after My personality and nature and character; the way God is. And you don't have to wait till you get to Heaven to start being more like Me, either—in fact you shouldn't! Start today to prepare yourself to live as a citizen of Heaven, and act as one, in a Godly fashion.

What is that like? What are the “fruits” or results of God's spirit being somewhere? Love, joy, peace, longsuffering (or patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (or moderation), are things mentioned in Galatians 5:22. What are some other things listed in the Bible? In Philippians 4:8 it says to think on things that are: True, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtue, praise. In James 3:17 it also lists some Godly qualities: “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits,

without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Perhaps you can look up some of those definitions and talk about what each of these words mean in practical every-day life. Start your training to day, to be a top-notch, high-class citizen of Heaven.

Now when you think of your life being the most wonderful, what do you imagine? Let’s list some of the things that most people would really enjoy, that Heaven will have. Maybe some of these things are important to you as well, and you’ll be happy to know you’ll get to have it one day—and if something good and wonderful that you really like isn’t listed here, well, remember, I know just how to make things special and perfect for you personally. I know just what you are thinking. There will be so much to look forward to. You don’t have to get too down about things being rather hard on Earth now. It won’t last all that much longer, and the good that comes afterwards for those who love and believe in Me, Jesus, will never end. Won’t that be wonderful?

In Heaven you won’t be sad and cry about things. You won’t feel hurt or have pain. You will always be in perfect health and wellbeing. There won’t be anything that hurts or destroys. All will be perfect and wonderful. You won’t have to miss your loved ones and family or friends, you’ll get to see them easily. You’ll never be hungry or thirsty, but can eat all you want of whatever you want that is there, but won’t feel discomfort. You’ll never be too cold or too hot, but will feel just great.

Coming up with shoes for your feet or clothes to wear won’t be a problem. Neither will sewing or weaving or washing clothes be a problem. There is nothing dirty there anyway. I will clothe you just right and provide all that is needed, and that makes you look just great, like a prince or princess of the King of kings! And there won’t even be a need to protect your feet, the streets and grass and everything there will be totally safe and comfortable to walk on.

You won’t get weary or tired or get headaches or backaches or blisters or bruises. You’ll never get sick in anyway. Every part of your body will be

in top good working order. You'll always have enough energy. You won't have to work hard. You can have fun and joy every day. You won't have to make money. There won't be some rich and others poor. All will have more than enough of the best things!

You will feel loved and special and important and appreciated, always—by others, and especially by the One Who made you. You'll get to talk to people who have lived before, that now live in Heaven, people you've always wanted to meet. Language won't be a problem, you'll be able to understand each other in new ways, and communicate with love and honesty.

The animals in Heaven will be the best you've ever seen, kind and gentle and fun to be around. There will be no pests and bothersome creatures. It will all be clean, without germs and disease. All will be amazing, yet gentle and lovely. The plants will grow beautifully, without weeds and thorns, or bugs that bother. The weather will always be perfect, Heavenly, really.

You'll be surrounded by love and beauty and get to try new and wonderful things. You'll get to learn new things you've always wanted to know how to do, or to learn about. The music in Heaven will totally thrill you, and make you feel so happy and inspired. You can have as many friends as you like, from all kinds of nationalities and families—since everyone is now one big family! You'll know love like you've never known before. You'll get to see God, our Heavenly Father, and talk with Him, and talk to Me, Jesus God's Son and all the angels! How's that for something really special?!

Heaven isn't just going to stay up high out of view forever either, but God's got plans to bring it down to Earth too, so not only those who live in Heaven can see it, but those who are on Earth too! However, the world is going to need to get quite cleaned up first, right? So here's the plan, briefly, so you can know what is going to come. It will help you to

remember these things when at first it seems things are just getting worse and worse. –Because at first they will!

I, Jesus, God’s Son, will come back at the end of this world’s time, when things seem they couldn’t get any worse—they won’t. I’ll stop it all, and take you and all those who love and believe in Me, up and away to the greatest party you have ever had. We are going to feast and laugh like you have never done before. The games and fun that will be enjoyed will make you so filled with joy it will make you forget the hard times here and now, it’ll be that good.

And it won’t be just a party that ends and the laughs are quiet, and it’s “back to work”. Oh no! That’s just the beginning of the joys that await you and others who are faithful, who are true, who are loyal to My cause, and who give Me their life and time and love now, here on Earth. The joys will just get bigger and better. You’ll get to do things that you’ve always wanted to do, and be a part of Heaven and all its activity and excitement and projects and ideas!

One of the great projects is going to be finishing up what many of you are helping Me now with—changing the world into a new and better place.

The Millennium

After all that has gone wrong with people choosing the wrong ways of doing things, and making a mess of nature in many places, and hurtful actions causing so much harm, don’t you think people will be ready to at last try to all do things in a new and better way? –God’s way!

When the punishment was given to Adam and Eve and to all the world, there were plans made by God to once again restore the Earth to beauty and peace. God will change things down on Earth again to being

pleasant and more beautiful, without the pests and troubles that are often part of life now. Growing food and raising animals will be so much easier. There will be peace on Earth again. And you, God’s children and those who have learned to do things His way, and are citizens of Heaven, will help to be in charge then of teaching those still on Earth the better way to live. Though there will still be hurts and accidents and some sickness then on Earth, there won’t be as much as there is now. The leaves from the Tree of Life will bring amazing healing and relief. People will live for a very long time once again. How fun!

Many of the prophets from long ago wrote down messages that gave glimpses into what this time on Earth will be like—the time when I am King, and things begin to be restored again to their original beauty. I want to give you a little “preview” in what is often referred to as the “Millennium” or the one-thousand years of peace and training for the citizens of Earth. Here are some of the things mentioned in the Bible, that were told to those faithful prophets of old who wrote them down, so that you and all the world could be encouraged now and have something to look forward to.

The wild and ferocious animals will be as pets and will be pleasant to have around. All the animals will get along wonderfully with one another. Animals and people will eat the food of plants, just as it was originally created in the Garden of Eden. So, both people and animals will be friends with one another and live happily.

There won’t be thorns and thistles, nor any poisons plants anymore. Weeds and thorny plants won’t grow up all over the place, so it will make it much easier to plant crops and enjoy a walk through a meadow. You won’t have to worry about getting a rash or ill from some plant that now might grow and cause discomfort. Children can pick berries that are growing wild, and not have to worry about which ones might be poisonous. They will all be good and delicious then.

There will be so much more land available to live on, and all that people need to supply the needs of their families will be provided for, right from the land they are living on. The need for big, noisy, polluted, crowded and danger-filled cities will be eliminated. People can live happily in natural surroundings, together with their families and loved ones and friends.

Things will go at a much calmer pace. Things will slow down a whole lot more. There won't be the need to rush and live a stress-filled life. Instead of rushing through the day, and getting sick from all the pressure, people can instead enjoy life—not just on vacation, but every day. Just that alone will help to relieve so many illnesses that many people suffer today.

Transportation will take on new forms, and many of the vehicles that have been part of the world now for the past one or two hundred years, will change. People won't have to rush to get from one place to the next. They won't have to come up with tons of money just to travel here and there, and pay for petrol and car registration, or airfare, or to buy a new car, and all that. It will be so much easier and pleasant—and a whole lot safer—to travel then, in the new world that is to come. How will you get around? Animals were made to be a help to people. Using animals for transportation will come back in style then, and be an essential part of living.

The life-span of people on Earth will be many more times what it now is today—especially in a world where there is so much sickness and danger. The modern means of transportation alone causes so many troubles. The switch to safer and more enjoyable means of getting around will make people live a lot longer. Just eliminating the fumes from the oil burning vehicles will bring so much health and strength to those on Earth, along with a whole lot of other changes.

People who have made it to 100 years nowadays are considered very fortunate and rare. But in the new and beautiful way the world will be for that time, when someone has their 100th birthday they will still be considered young! Imagine that! A world where being 100 years old is young. You'll be good looking, strong and healthy for a very long time then!

These one-thousand years of peace on Earth, and a new and beautiful way to live will come to an end, making way for something else! Thus comes the final part in this storybook, that tells of a new and wonderful beginning!

Once those in the world get many years to learn God's new ways, and how to have a peaceful world again, and to live in love, God will give the Earth a "make over". He's going to take away anything that is left that shouldn't be part of the world—any remaining pollution, and any things that some naughty people might be trying to make and do that aren't Godly. The whole world will be made clean and fresh again—even the sky and atmosphere will be clean and beautiful again. And only the people who want to live in God's way will be allowed to stick around. Anything and everything bad, including the people who only wish to do bad continually, will be taken away from the Earth.

Then, like the surprise at a birthday party, the big and beautiful gift of the Heavenly City will come down to Earth, for all to see and wonder at, and be thrilled to see. Those who are citizens of the Heavenly City can go and come as they wish, and can visit those on Earth, and return to their special place in the shining golden City!

It's God's City, and He'll be the King of all. No one else will make the world the way they think it should be, or force others to do this or that. The King of Love will come down, and be totally in charge, and be with people, talk with them, be their God and their Ruler. Isn't that love? Doesn't that show you how much our Heavenly Father loves you? He loves

people and wants to be with them, and realizes that people need Him around too, to make the World the best place ever.

Are you glad that you can be a part of His Kingdom? And you can look forward to a time when all the world will know and love Him, and be filled with His love! Who knows what will happen then? You'll just have to wait to find out! I'll see you soon, I promise! I love you so much, I can hardly wait to show you to your happy Heavenly home.

