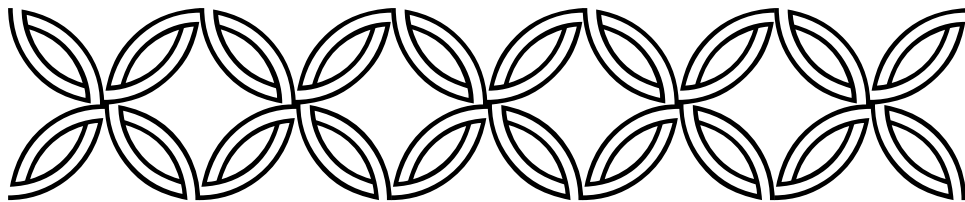
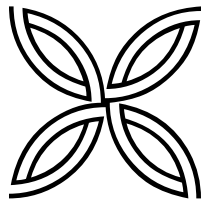


“Come unto me all you who are weary
and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

The Suffering Servant



The Suffering Servant



"From one man he made every nation of men,
that they should inhabit the whole earth;
and he determined the times set for them
and the exact places where they should live.
God did this so that men would seek him and
perhaps reach out for him, though he is not
far from each one of us. For in him we live
and move and have our being."

Acts 17:26-28a

The Suffering Servant

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International Mission Board, SBC

Singapore

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All Scriptures quoted or adapted are from the New International Version Bible.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

An Introduction

Worldview Considerations:

This storying set is based on issues of interest and concern to a primarily Bengali Muslim target group. The Islamic issues are subjugated to the cultural and historical issues of the Bengali people who have suffered from war, weather, political instability and economic necessity. They live in a primarily “Bengali” culture but with largely folk Islamic beliefs and practice with a considerable amount of Hindu syncretism. The Bengali culture opens them up to the use of stories as an oral culture people. While Dhaka is the primate city for the Bangladesh Bengalis, most still live in rural surroundings and lifestyle.

As a people they are proud, yet many are broken spiritually. They are a spiritually sensitive people who, either in their Islamic beliefs or in their culture, realize that they need Allah’s blessing. They long to be accepted and loved by a God who is “far away” because of their religious beliefs. They respond to suffering because they, too, have suffered and continue to do so.

Primary Focus:

The primary focus of the story model is on “The Suffering Servant”. The Suffering Servant is introduced by a series of stories which explore man’s suffering for his sin and resulting alienation from God who created man and who wants to bless man. The issue of a substitute’s suffering is considered with the introduction of the shedding of innocent blood to cover sin and the sacrifice for sin of an innocent life as a substitute for the guilty.

Other issues explored are the love of God the Father and his conditions for acceptance, the need for repentance (a strong cultural need), and the necessity of belief through faith in Christ Jesus in order to receive God’s forgiveness of sins and blessing.

The Issues are:

1. God (Allah) created mankind for fellowship and expresses his love by blessing all people, providing their life and breath and provisions for existence.
2. Mankind’s disobedience has broken that fellowship resulting in suffering for people, both as an immediate consequence of sin for the sinner and those about them, and in the covenant relationship with God.
3. God the Father is merciful in that He continues to love all people and wants to forgive the sin that has caused their suffering.
 - a. That mercy is expressed in the warnings that God gives through his prophets and angels.
 - b. That mercy is expressed in God’s provision for escaping his judgment by those who believe what He says and who do what He commands to do.
 - c. God’s love is unconditional, even in his punishment for sin.
4. God has provided a substitute to suffer in mankind’s place by placing the iniquity of all people upon him as a Suffering Servant (one who is obedient even unto death).

5. There is the necessity of belief in the Anointed One (Isa al Masih) God has provided as the Suffering Servant.
6. Blessing comes with repentance from the sin that has caused the suffering.
7. Bearing fruit in a repentant life honors God who has provided the Substitute to suffer in mankind's place.

Presentation of the Story Lessons

Muslim audiences vary widely in their acceptance and openness of what is considered “Christian” teaching. While there is often a curiosity about what the Taurat (Pentateuch), Mazmur (Psalms), and Injil (Gospel) teach, there is the underlying suspicion that somehow these have been altered by Christians and so are no longer truthful.

One of the great internal strengths of the Bible is its integrity as story merges into story with a continuation of the themes throughout. The storyer must take advantage of this integrity by carefully bridging between stories, especially when skipping stories for the sake of brevity.

Another consideration is that of favoring the narrative rather than the expositional presentation, especially if there is latent hostility to “Christian preaching”. The lessons then would take on more of an informal dialog time in which some Sensitizing questions prepare listeners for the story to follow. The sensitizing questions must relate to their primary as well as their secondary worldview issues.

Primary issues usually relate to perceived needs such as food, shelter, other economic factors, freedom from oppression, acceptance by God, and freedom from suffering by whatever cause. Secondary issues are more idealistic and often more conservative in their nature relating to an ideal practice of their religion, an ideal society, and other dreams of fulfillment. When the primary issues are weak, then the ideal issues are raised in importance. The storyer needs to be aware of these and their relative importance to the audience.

The story speaks to the issues raised in the pre-story dialog time. The story may be strongly connected to the worldview issues by saying “Here is a story about...” and then relating it to the issues. Or, the story may be opened blindly by simply moving from the dialog to the story and then letting the audience find how the story relates to the issues being raised. There is both a skill and an art involved in knowing how to do this. The *skill* comes from study and practice and the *art* from a sensitivity to the culture and the people and how they respond to new concepts. The Bible storyer needs both.

So while there is a lesson of organized content, it is presented more as a session or time of sharing which the storyer utilizes according to his relationship with the people. The stories in the beginning may take on *more of an entertainment* (in the sense of being interesting and provoking curiosity), while holding their attention, then moving on to deeper and more internalized spiritual concepts which speak to their worldview issues. The initial relationship then becomes the basis for further storying.

In a lesson there is implied some structure as needed to present a certain body of content — “the Bible lesson” which may be either wholly narrative or wholly expositional (and propositional) and all degrees in between. These lessons, however, favor the narrative presentation of biblical truth. In a storying session there is only a loosely organized structure which flows with the relationship between storyer and listeners. The structure is thus subtle and flexible and, according to the openness of the group and its perceptions about Christianity and

the Bible; it moves to expose the group to a new Bible story which is somehow related to the previous stories and their themes.

In the Bengali culture there is a rich heritage of “drama” which, while often overly exaggerated by the actors, is greatly enjoyed by the people. The drama is free to explore all the emotions of people—anger, fear, hatred, love, humor, sadness and joy, as well as the relationships and circumstances which different personalities and emotions invoke—domination, submission, irony, failure, success, poverty and wealth. Their drama often employs an irony in that the generally perceived “bad” person is actually the better person, much like that in the story of the Good Samaritan.

While Bible stories are generally classified as “spiritual” they, too, contain the spectrum of emotion as well as circumstances common to man. The spiritual element should not be lost while exploring these but should help to tie them together and give them a greater meaning and purpose as the stories move toward the life, ministry and death of Jesus. It has been this storyer’s experience that the listeners find the irony and humor in stories related to their own culture. And they enjoy the other elements in Bible stories which closely parallel their own lives and culture. The foreigner as storyer must learn to be perceptive to these. The Bengali storyer will intuitively find them if allowed to do so unless trained not to do so.

Audience Participation:

The Bengali audience like to participate and will do so vocally and physically as they respond to the stories. Practices like the use of teaching aids (Characteristics of God charts—either visual or oral, etc.) can be beneficial as providing opportunity for a meaningful response and participation in the story while giving some direction or boundaries to the responses.

Other forms of participation include retelling earlier stories as well the current story, and participating in dialog times, if that is not threatening or precipitating hostility by more conservative listeners (or religious leaders). Listening Tasks are also a good way of “playing the game” to involve the listeners. It may take a few lessons for the listeners to learn how to play the participation game. As a Bible storyer you will learn from them, too.

Use of Pictures:

Using pictures of the prophets including Jesus can be a problem with more conservative Muslims. While there is a certain advantage to having pictures which illustrate the tabernacle and altar of sacrifice, pictures of the unclothed Adam and Eve are not received very well by the modest Bengali society. Other pictures may raise unintended concerns for social propriety. One such picture in a set is that of Jesus and the Samaritan woman alone at the well which is not generally acceptable. The length of her dress is deemed too short by many viewers. The pictures of the suffering of Jesus, while strongly reinforcing the theme of the stories, may prove too much for a people who assume that God would never let one of his great prophets suffer like that. Shame is a strong element in the culture.

It has been found in practice that black & white line drawings are less inflammatory than are high detail color pictures. Rural people may be more open to pictures because of the intermixing of Hindus (with their image-driven religion) than are urban people living in a uniform Islamic neighborhood. Pictures may be tolerated better in a small group where the storyer has some

element of control, where there is opportunity to explain the pictures, and where some believers are present to moderate the situation. Students and professional people may have a greater tolerance for new ideas presented by pictures than more conservative older people. Pictures will attract children though the accompanying stories are not intended for children.

In all cases, it is advisable to test any picture sets before using them. Test first on a trusted informant to be sure there are not any gross breaches of propriety and then on a small group to see their interest and response to pictures which challenge their religion.

Other Audiovisuals or Oral Charts:

The *JESUS Film* may be used with better effectiveness after first sharing the Old Testament lessons to prepare the viewers for the Promised One. Drama, either with rehearsed actors or in a skit form, may be helpful to illustrate some of the stories. Since the people have a rich heritage of drama it will be enjoyed even if they do not agree with the theme of the drama. Village folksongs such as *jarigan* and *kobigan* which employ songs, drama and monolog can be very effective if there is someone who can do it.

A *Characteristics of God* chart has been very effective as a teaching tool among Bengali Hindus. A modified form of this chart is listed at the back for consideration. The chart lists certain of God's characteristics that can be drawn out of each story. The chart is short and may be memorized by the participants who then are challenged to look for any of the characteristics first of God, then of Jesus in the stories. This becomes a *game* that the storyer plays with the listeners. "Who can tell us which of God's characteristics are found in this story...?" Among those less literate teach the chart to the group by recitation and then use it only as an "oral chart".

A Last Word about Using this Model or Any Other Storying Model

This is a model which means that it is a guideline or suggestion which you, the storyer, will need to adapt to suit the needs and expectations of your listeners to maintain an open relation with them *to hear all the story*. So there are certain expressions or terms which have been modified for a Muslim listening audience. One of these is "Israel" for which has been substituted "descendants of Abraham". The expressions "Promised One" and "Anointed One" are used to refer to the coming Suffering Servant. However, there comes a time when hopefully the listeners are prepared to hear the truth. So when finally coming to the story of Jesus there is an attempt to introduce "Son of God" as part of the angel's words to Mary.

One of the reasons for telling the stories is to exercise the limited freedom to adapt the stories for your listeners—not compromising the message but accommodating the listeners to keep them listening. If you are uncomfortable doing this, then do what you think is best.

Also feel free to restructure the stories as needed, shortening or lengthening as needed, or adding any needed comment. Also feel free to add additional stories if needed to deal with listeners' lack of comprehension, and similarly to skip any stories which may not be needed. If listeners need to hear a story again, then retell the story or even repeat the lesson.

The Pre-Story Dialog and Post-Story Dialog are suggestions to give you ideas of how to open a discussion leading into the story and how to come out of the story and into the listeners' hearts, leading them to learn from the Word. The storying session may be informal and conversational

(less threatening) or formal (to maintain order, direction and control). An open discussion is conversational, a catechism of Q&A is more ordered.

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GOD'S HOLY WORD—A BOOK FOR ALL PEOPLE

Scriptures to Study: Deuteronomy 31:9-12, 24-25; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:11, 105; Isa 40:8; Jeremiah 30:1-2; Luke 1:1-4; John 20:31; Romans 15:4; 1Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 4:12; 1Timothy 4:13; 2Timothy 3:15-16; 2Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 22:19

Talk About These Things:

(During this pre-story time the object is to get the listeners thinking about the theme of the coming story. At this point there are no right or wrong answers. It may be helpful to get several opinions or versions, especially if what is shared is too far off the subject. Do not give the answers if there are questions. Instead ask: What do you think? Or say: We'll find the answer in today's story.)

1. There are many holy books in the world today. How can we know which are true?
2. How can we know what God has done for us?
3. How does God expect man to live? How can we know this?
4. How did God speak to people in the former days?
5. What is God's message for us today?
6. Has God's Word been changed by man?

Read From Bible: Hebrews 4:12

Tell the Story:

God's Holy Word—A Book for all People

Long ago during the days of the Prophet Moses God spoke to Moses and told him to write down the history of God's people and God's laws for the people to live by. Moses wrote these in a book. God spoke to other prophets and commanded some to write the words that God spoke. He guided others to write what happened in that day, the things that God did for the people, and the things the people did, whether obeying God or not. God used forty men over the very long time of 1600 years to write the words in the Bible. What was written in the beginning agreed with what was written at the end because God guided the writing and protected His words.

Most of the men were descendants of Abraham and they wrote in the language spoken in their day. The words of the Old Covenant were written mostly in the Hebrew language and that of the New Covenant in the Greek language. The Old Covenant was composed of the Torah (Taurat), the Psalms (Zabur or Mazmur), and the Prophets. The new Covenant included the Gospels (Injil) that were the four accounts of the life of Jesus (Isa al Masih) and the letters written by the Prophet Paul and other prophets to believers and worshipers after Jesus returned to heaven.

Many people believe the Injil was a book God sent down from heaven with Isa al Masih. But it is really the story of Isa al Masih as told by eye witnesses who God guided to write their stories and the words that Isa al Masih spoke. The Injil tells of the New Covenant between God and man.

The Bible was later collected into one book with 66 parts. Though it had many writers and has many parts, it has one central message about the Anointed One that God promised to send to suffer for our sin so that we might be forgiven and made righteous before God.

Things that happened in the old days were written down as a warning against sin for us today.

They were written to give us hope and encouragement so that we might have forgiveness of sin and everlasting life through the Anointed One God would send. The Bible tells of everlasting life beyond this life for believers and of everlasting punishment for those whose sins are not forgiven. God's Word is very powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, able to penetrate our very souls and judge our thoughts. God gave us his words to discipline us and to guide our lives so that our lives will be pleasing to God.

God's Word is eternal, it will never fade or pass away. One writer said that God's Word was like a lamp for his feet and light for his pathway. And he had hidden God's Word in his heart so that he might not sin against God.

God wants all people to know his Word. So God has blessed the translation of his Word into many languages so that all people might hear it and read it in their own language. God is powerful to protect his Word so that it is not changed. When copies of God's Word are compared with very old copies the meaning is the same. The true stories you will hear all come from God's Word. You may read them for yourself so that you will know what God has done and said. It is God's Holy Spirit who helps us to understand God's Word and apply it to our lives.

Let's Talk Some More:

(In coming lessons the general pattern will be first factual easy questions which can be answered from what happened in the story, or who was in the story and what they said or did. The questions will move on to some thinking questions to stretch the listeners a bit, to draw them into the story and its actions and consequences. Finally the questions for discussion will move to personalize or internalize the truths in the story for the listeners.)

1. Why do you think God caused his Words to be written down? *(So all people might hear them and know them.)*
2. Can you name one of the prophets that God used to write down his words? *(Moses)*
3. Does anyone know what a Covenant or Testament is? *(An agreement between two persons—like a promise that one will do something for the other. Usually both persons promise mutually to do certain things.)*
4. Why do you think the two parts of the Bible are called the Old Covenant (or Testament) and the New Covenant (Testament)? *(The listeners do not have enough information about this now. It is merely being brought up as part of the introduction to God's promises and expectation for mankind.)*
5. Can anyone name some of the reasons that God caused his words to be written down? *(Warning about sin, how to have forgiveness of sin, to give hope and encouragement, about the Anointed One coming from God, about everlasting life beyond this life for believers and everlasting punishment beyond this life for those whose sins are not forgiven, and about how to live a life that is pleasing to God.)*
6. Will God's Word ever fail and fade away? *(No, God's Word is eternal, never fading.)*
7. Has God's Word been changed (corrupted) by man? *(No, God is powerful to protect his Word from change or corruption.)*
8. Does God want all people to know his Word? *(Yes. Because He does the Bible has been put into the languages that people speak and read today so that all may know its words.)*
9. How does God help us to understand his Word and apply it to our lives? *(By his Holy Spirit.)*
10. Does anyone remember what is the Injil? Is it a book or an account of someone? Who?

A Verse to Remember: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:4

Note: *This memory verse is only a suggested one. You may substitute any other verse deemed more appropriate. Sometimes this may be one of the verses the story is taken from. The verse may either encapsulate the story and its truth, may be reflective, or may be forward looking at coming truth.*

THE GOD WHO SEES AND CARES

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 16:13; Exodus 3:7-9; 2Samuel 22:1-2; Psalm 34:15-22; 55:22; 139:7-10; (1Peter 5:7)

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you see and know everything that happens among your people?
2. Do you care about everyone among your own people—their welfare and deliverance in time of trouble?
3. Are you able to help or deliver them where there is trouble?
4. Where do you or your people turn for help when there is trouble? When there is need?
5. Do you know of anyone whose gods failed them when there was need? (*if appropriate*)
6. Does God see everything you do and know everything that happens to you?
7. Do you think God cares about you and your family?

Read From Bible: Psalm 34:15-22

Tell the Story:**The God Who Sees and Cares**

God's Word the Bible tells us many things about God from the stories of people when God saw their suffering and helped them. The stories remind us that God is all knowing which means that He sees and hears all things. The stories also remind us that God is merciful and filled with compassion for us, delivering us from our suffering and troubles when we call on him for help.

During the days of Abraham and Sarah the Egyptian servant girl named Hagar ran away because her mistress made her suffer. God sent his angel to find her. The angel said, "Hagar, servant of Sarah, where are you coming from and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress," Hagar answered. "Go back to your mistress and submit to her and I will increase your descendants so they will be too many to number," the angel said. "You will have a son and shall name him Ishmael." Hagar called God "the Living One who sees me". Later when Hagar and Ishmael were sent away, God saw their suffering and saved their lives.

In the days of Moses the descendants of Abraham were living in the land of Egypt. After many years had passed the Egyptians pressed them into bitter slavery and great suffering. They were beaten and caused to work hard making bricks. An order was given for all their boy babies to be killed when they were born. One day God spoke to the prophet Moses saying, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard their crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned because of their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians who are oppressing them." So God sent Moses back into the land of Egypt and helped Moses to deliver the people from their suffering.

After many years had passed, during the days of the prophet David, many times God delivered David from those who sought to take his life. Before David himself became king Saul who was the king threw a spear at David intending to kill him. But David escaped. Later King David faced enemies who were oppressing God's people. God helped David to defeat his enemies and delivered David from harm. Then David sang to the Lord a song about how God had helped him:

"The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;

my God is my rock, in who I take refuge,
my shield and the strength (*horn*) of my salvation.
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my Savior...
I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise,
and I am saved from my enemies.”

After many more years had passed one day God sent his angel to say that He was sending the Anointed One to save all people from their sins. God’s Word says:

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight.
Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him
to whom we must give account.” (*Hebrews 4:13*)
“But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness.” (*Psalm 86:15*)
“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you,
he will never let the righteous fall.” (*Psalm 55:22; 1Peter 5:7*)

God is a God who sees our suffering and cares about us. He is able to deliver us from our sin and suffering. Soon we will have a story about the Anointed One God sent to suffer for our sin.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Where can we learn about the characteristics of God? (*From the stories about God’s dealing with man.*)
2. Did God see and know about Hagar’s need? (*Yes. He sent an angel to find her and help her.*)
3. What did Hagar call God after he had helped her? (*The Living One who sees me.*)
4. Did God save Hagar and Ishmael’s life? (*Yes. We will have that story again later on.*)
5. Did God see and know about the suffering of Abraham’s descendants in Egypt? (*Yes.*)
6. What did God say to Moses? (*“I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned because of their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians who are oppressing them.”*) (*We’ll have this story again later on.*)
7. Did God help David in his suffering and time of need? (*Yes.*)
8. What did David have to say about God’s help? (*God was his deliverer, his strength, his Savior.*)
9. What did God promise to do for all people? (*To send his Anointed One to save all people from their sins.*)
10. What do you think it means to be saved from your sins? (*Open question to introduce the concept of sin, judgment and salvation which will be covered later on.*)
11. Do you think God sees you and knows of your suffering and need?
12. Do you think God cares for you? Can you name some ways which God shows his love and care for you?

A Verse to Remember: “Cast all your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you, he will never let the righteous fall.” Psalm 55:22

GOD CREATED THE SPIRIT WORLD

Scriptures to Study: Psalm 148:2, 5; 103:20-21; 104:4 (Hebrews 1:7); Job 38:7; Ezekiel 28:12b-17a; Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:7-12; Jude 6 (2Pe 2:4); Luke 1:19; 24:4; Hebrews 1:14; Matthews 13:39(24:31); Luke 9:39; Revelation 5:11; Isaiah 6:3; 1Corinthians 5:5; 2Corinthians 4:4; 11:14-15 John 8:44; 1John 3:8; Revelation 20:10; 22:8-9 (*These are for the storyer's background study. Not all the references may be applicable to every storying situation. Where these apply to the story they will be included in parentheses, do not quote references as you tell the story. The references are to help in preparing lessons in the target language.*)

Talk About These Things:

1. Are there spirits that man cannot see with his eyes? Has anyone seen such spirits?
2. What do spirits do? Are they harmful? Are they helpful?
3. Who made the spirits? Who rules over the spirits?
4. If spirits are evil, who punishes them? What is their punishment?
5. If spirits are good, what is their work?

Read From Bible: Psalm 148:2, 5; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 20:10

Tell the Story:

God Created The Spirit World

Long ago, before God created the heavens and the earth, He created all the spirits. (*Job 38:7*) Since God is holy and good, He created the spirits like himself—holy and without sin. God commanded and the spirits were created. (*Psalm 148:2,5*) The spirits are too many to be counted. (*Revelation 5:11*). God created the spirits to serve Him, (*Psalm 103:20-21*), to do His work, and to worship Him. (*Isaiah 6:3*)

One spirit was created far more beautiful, powerful and wise than the others. (*Ezekiel 28:12b-13*) God created him to guard God's holy throne in heaven. (*Ezekiel 28:14*) But this spirit became filled with pride and jealous of God who made him, and desired to be like God, even to take for himself the place of God to rule over heaven. (*Isaiah 14:13-14*) The pure sinless heart God gave him became filled with wickedness. (*Ezekiel 28:15, 17*) Some of the other spirits joined him in his rebellion. (*Revelation 12:4*) God judged this rebellion as sin, defeated this spirit and cast him out of heaven to await a day of everlasting punishment in fire. The other spirits were also put under God's judgment waiting for their day of punishment. (*2Peter 2:4*)

This powerful spirit was once called "Lucifer" (the *shining* or *bright one*) because of his great beauty. (*Isaiah 14:12*) Now we know him as the devil or Satan, a name which means "accuser". (*Revelation 12:9-10*) Satan seeks to destroy the work of God. But he can do nothing except what God permits him to do. (*Job 1:12*) Satan was now called a liar and a murderer. (*John 8:44*) And God warned man to be careful so Satan does not deceive him by pretending to be a good angel. (*2Corinthians 11:14-15*) The other evil spirits are like Satan for they seek to deceive and harm people. (*Luke 9:39*)

The spirits can do nothing except what God permits them to do. Sometimes God permits Satan to test people to strengthen their faith in God (*2Corinthians 12:7-8*), or to punish people when they

become sinful. (*1Corinthians 5:5*) A special place called Hell is being prepared for Satan and his demons. Some day when the time of judgment comes, Satan will be completely defeated, his power broken, and eternally punished. (*Revelation 20:10*) Other evil spirits are imprisoned awaiting their day of judgment. (*2Peter 2:4, Jude 6*)

Not all spirits that God created became evil. Most of the spirits continued to obey God and do the work that God gave them to do. (*Psalms 103:20-21*) We know these spirits as angels or “messengers”.

In the past God answered prayer and spoke to people through angels. (*Luke 1:11*) God sends his angels to help people. (*Genesis 19:12-13; Acts 7:12*) He also sends his angels to warn people about sin and to punish them if they continue to sin. (*Numbers 22:32*) At the end of the world God will send his angels like harvesters to gather all people unto himself for a time of judgment. (*Matthew 13:39; 24:31*)

People are not to worship angels. (*Revelation 22:8-9*) They are powerful and wise, but they are only created spirits who serve and worship God. God alone is ruler of the spirit world for He created all the spirits according to his purposes to serve him and to serve us.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. Who does the Bible say created the spirits? (*God.*)
2. Were the spirits that God created good or evil? Why? (*God is righteous and good, all his work is good.*)
3. How many spirits did God create? (*Too many to count—beyond numbering*)
4. Why did God create one spirit more powerful, beautiful and wise? (*To guard his holy throne*)
5. What happened? What did that beautiful spirit do? (*Became filled with pride and became jealous of God and wanted to take his place in heaven*)
6. Who was more powerful God or Lucifer (*Satan*)? (*God.*)
7. Do Satan and the evil spirits try to help people? (*No. Instead they work to harm people.*)
8. Can Satan do anything he wants to do? (*No. God limits what he can do.*)
9. Did all of the spirits become evil? (*No. Only some of them.*) What happened to the rest of the spirits? (*They remained faithful and did the work God gave them to do.*)
10. What are these faithful spirits called? (*Angels—“messengers”*)
11. What is the work God gives these angels to do? (*Bring answers to prayer, help people in need, warn people about sin, punish sinners.*)
12. Are we to worship angels because they are very wise and powerful? (*No. They are only created beings God made to help us. Hebrews 1:14*)
13. What does this story teach us about God? (*He is righteous and all his work is good. He is more powerful than evil spirits and Satan. God is merciful as He uses the angels to help people.*)

A Verse to Remember: “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” Hebrews 1:14

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 1:1-31; 2:7-25; Psalm 8:4-8; 100:3; 139:13-16

Talk About These Things:

1. Can anyone imagine a place where there is no suffering? No war, no floods, no cyclones, no disease, no hunger or thirst, no harm, injuries or killing.
2. What would it take to have such a place where there was no suffering? Talk about it.
3. What do you think is the cause of suffering?
4. How did suffering come into the world? Who was responsible?
5. Does God care when we suffer? Does He see our suffering? What does God do when we suffer?

Read From Bible: Genesis 1:1, 26-28, 31

Tell the Story:**Creation—In the Beginning There Was No Suffering**

In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. When the earth was dark and without any life, God spoke and there was light. God divided the waters into seas and made the dry land to appear. Then God made the trees with fruit, and the flowers and plants that produce vegetables, and green grass. Soon he put the sun, moon and stars in the heavens to give light and to mark the days and seasons. Then God made the fish to swim in the rivers and sea, then the birds to fly through the air. God saw that his work was good. He blessed the fish and birds and told them to increase in number. Then God made the animals and all creatures that move along the ground. He made the wild animals and the domestic animals. Then God gave to the birds, and all the animals and creatures that move on the ground the green plants to be their food.

Now God said He was going to make man in his own image. And so God made them male and female. It was the man that God made first. He made him from the dust of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life. God put the man in a garden God had prepared for man to care for the garden. God told the man he could eat fruit from any tree that was in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For God said that when man ate from that tree he would surely die.

God saw that the man had no suitable companion like him. So God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping God opened the man's flesh and removed bone and flesh to make a woman. Then God brought the woman to the man. The man, Adam, was very pleased and said he would call her "woman" for she was taken out of man. Now the man and woman that God had made were both naked but felt no shame.

God blessed the man and woman and said to them: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth with your kind, and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

Then God said, "I give you every seed bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. These will be yours for food."

So in six days God completed his work of creation and on the seventh day he rested. When God looked at his work, and especially the man and woman He had made, He said: "It is very good."

So in that day there was yet no suffering or death for in all God's creation there was peace and harmony and God saw that it was very good. On the seventh day God rested from his work and blessed that day calling that day a holy day.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. Who made the heavens and the earth? (*God.*)
2. What did God say about his work? (*It was good*)
3. What did God do after He made the fish and birds? (*He blessed them and told them to multiply.*)
4. What did God make next after the fish and birds? (*All the animals and creatures that move on the ground.*)
5. In whose image did God make man and woman? (*In his own image or likeness.*)
6. If God is good and righteous, what can we say about the man and woman God made in his image? (*They, too, were good and righteous—without sin.*)
7. What food did God give to the birds and animals to eat? (*The green grass*)
8. What food did God say that the man could eat? (*Fruit from any tree in the garden except that from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*)
9. After God made the woman and presented her to the man what did He say about his work? (*It was very good*)
10. What foods did God say the man and woman could eat? (*Every seed-bearing plant on the whole earth and fruit that had seeds in it.*)
11. Was there any suffering or death in the beginning after God created everything? (*No. There was peace and harmony and no suffering.*)
12. Is all of God's work good? (*Yes*)
13. Can you think of some good work that God has done? What makes it good?

A Verse to Remember: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing...Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:1, 6

DISOBEDIENCE BRINGS SUFFERING AND DEATH

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 3:1-24; 5:5; Job 33:4; Romans 5:12; 1Corinthians 15:21, 22a (*do not mention Christ as this time*)

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you know someone who has suffered? What happened to them? Did they find any relief?
2. Has anyone in the group suffered? What happened? What caused the suffering?
3. How can we find relief from suffering? Where can we go for relief? Who can we turn to for relief from suffering?
4. Would anyone be willing to suffer in the place of another person, to bear their suffering if they are a loved one (family)? A neighbor? Someone they don't know? An enemy?

Read From Bible: Genesis 3:16-19

Tell the Story:

Disobedience Brings Suffering and Death

God had created a beautiful world with all its creatures and the first man and woman. God had blessed them and placed them in a garden where food was plentiful. At that time there was peace and harmony, even between the man and woman and all the animals. As yet there was no suffering and no death. God had given a commandment that the man was not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or he would surely die.

One day the serpent, who was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made, said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from ANY TREE in the garden?'" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

"You will not surely die," the serpent slyly answered. "For God knows that when you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil your eyes will be opened, and you will be wise like God, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food, and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. The woman also gave some to her husband, who was with her. And he also ate the fruit. Then the eyes of both man and woman were opened, and they realized they were naked and became ashamed. They sewed leaves together and so made coverings to hide their nakedness.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. He was calling for them, but they had hidden themselves among the trees of the garden. "Where are you?" God called. The man answered, "I heard you in the garden; because I was naked I was afraid and hid."

Then God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you not to eat from?" The man excused himself saying, "The woman, the woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it."

Then God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman excused herself saying, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate the fruit."

So then the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are now cursed above all the animals. You will crawl on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. I will put enmity (*deep-seated hatred, antagonism*) between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers. Her offspring will crush your head, but you will strike his heel."

To the woman God said, “I will greatly increase your suffering in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

To the man, Adam, God said, “Because you listened to your wife and disobeyed me by eating from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ now the ground is cursed because of what you have done. Through painful toil you will eat the plants of the field which you grow. But the ground will also produce thorns and thistles. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you one day return to the ground from which you were taken. You were made from dust and to dust you will return.”

Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all peoples. God made clothing of animal skins for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness. Then God put the man and woman out of the garden He had made for them, because now they knew both good and evil, and God did not want them to eat from the tree of life and live forever while suffering for their disobedience.

So the Lord God banished the man from the Garden of Eden to work the ground he had been taken from. And God placed an angel with a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life. Adam lived a long life and had many children, then he died just as God had said would happen.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Did God provide food for the man and woman to eat? *(Yes. God gave them all the trees which bore fruit with seeds and every seed-bearing plant on the whole earth.)*
2. What did God command the man not to do? *(He must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or he would die.)*
3. Did the woman know what God had commanded the man not to do? *(Yes. Because she repeated to the serpent God’s command.)*
4. Was the serpent telling the truth when he said God’s command was not to eat from any tree in the garden? *(No. He was testing the woman to see if she would listen to him instead of God.)*
5. After the woman answered the serpent, what reason did he give why God did not want them to eat from the tree? *(God did not want them to become wise like God, knowing good and evil.)*
6. What did the woman consider before taking the fruit to eat? *(It was good for food, it was pleasing to look at, and it would be good to be wise like God.)*
7. When the woman offered the fruit to her husband did he object? *(No. He took the fruit and ate it.)*
8. What happened when the man and woman ate the fruit? *(Their eyes were opened—that is, they realized that they were naked and became ashamed and afraid.)*
9. When God came to see the man and woman what had happened? *(They had made clothing of leaves to cover their nakedness and then hidden themselves because of fear.)*
10. Did the man and woman make excuse for their disobedience? *(Yes. The man blamed God for giving him the woman, the woman blamed the serpent who deceived her.)*
11. When God judged the disobedience of the serpent, woman and man what was the punishment? *(They would each suffer for their disobedience.)*
12. What was the suffering for the serpent? *(He would be hated by the woman’s offspring and one day his head would be crushed?)* What do you think it means that his head would be crushed?
13. What was the suffering for the woman? *(Increased pain in childbearing and her husband would now rule over her.)*
14. What was the suffering for the man? *(The ground was under a curse and would produce thorns and thistles when the man had to work hard to grow his own food.)*
15. What would happen to the man one day? *(He would die and his body return to the dust from which he was made.)*
16. Did God still love the man and woman? *(Yes)* How did God express his love? *(He made better clothing of animal skins to cover their nakedness. God did not want the man and woman to live forever in their sinful condition, so He barred their way to the tree of life.)*

17. If God made clothing of animal skins for Adam and Eve what happened to the animals from which the skins were taken? (*They had to suffer and die, their blood was shed.*)
18. Were the animals guilty of sin (*disobedience*)? (*No. They were innocent of any wrongdoing.*)
- State:** *So the blood of the innocent was shed to cover the guilt of the disobedient to ease their suffering and shame.*

A Verse to Remember: “Therefore just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12

CAIN'S RASH ACT—CAIN AND ABEL SUFFER

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 4:1-16; Hebrews 11:4; 1John 3:12; 1Samuel 16:7

Talk About These Things:

1. When you worship God what are you thinking about? What is really in your heart? (*No one needs to answer this aloud, but to consider it for a moment.*)
2. Has anyone ever done something rashly that they later regretted? Were they able to undo their rash act—make it right again?
3. What causes jealousy? Name some things which cause jealousy between two people.
4. Does God see and know all that we think and do?
5. Do our actions cause suffering for others?
6. Do our actions cause suffering for ourselves?

Read From Bible: Genesis 4:1-2, 4-5, 13-14

Tell the Story:**Cain's Rash Act—Cain and Abel Suffer**

God had said to Eve that one day she would give birth to children, though in pain. God had blessed Adam and Eve telling them to be fruitful and multiply—to have many children. Some time after Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden, Adam slept with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Cain and exclaimed, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man!” At a later time she conceived again and gave birth to another son and named him Abel.

Cain tilled the soil, being a farmer like his father Adam. Abel was a shepherd, caring for the flocks of animals. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil—food he had grown, as an offering to the Lord. (*See Exodus 23:16, 19*) Abel, too, brought an offering of the fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. (*See Leviticus 3:14-16*)

The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering. But on Cain and his offering the Lord did not look with favor. So Cain became very angry. His face was downcast.

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, you will be accepted. But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must overcome it.”

Soon Cain said to his brother, “Let’s go out to the field.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord spoke to Cain again saying, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” Cain replied. “Am I my brother’s caretaker?”

Then the Lord said to Cain, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground where you have spilled it. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

But Cain cried out to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me away from this land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

But the Lord said, “Not so; if anyone harms Cain he will suffer vengeance seven times over.”

Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found Cain would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in another land.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. Did God say that Adam and Eve were to have children? (*Yes. They were to be fruitful and multiply—have many children and descendants. But Eve would suffer through pain in childbirth.*)
2. What did Eve say when she gave birth to her first son? (*With the help of the Lord I have given birth to a man.*)
3. What was Cain's work? (*a farmer like his father Adam.*) What was Abel's work? (*Shepherd.*)
4. Who decided first to bring an offering to the Lord? (*Cain*) What offering did he bring? (*Some of the fruits of the soil—vegetables and other foods he had grown as a farmer.*)
5. What offering did Abel bring? (*Fat portions from among the firstborn of his flock.*)
6. Which offering did God accept and which offering did God not look with favor on? (*God was pleased with Abel's offering and accepted it. God did not look with favor on Cain and his offering.*)
7. What was Cain's attitude when God rejected him and his offering? (*He became angry, his face downcast.*)
8. What warning did God give Cain? (*If you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door waiting to have you, but you must overcome it.*)
9. Then what did Cain do after God spoke to him? (*He went to his brother Abel and asked him to go out into the field where Cain attacked and killed Abel.*)
10. What question did God ask Cain after Cain had killed his brother? (*Where is your brother Abel?*) Did God know what had happened to Abel? (*Yes.*) Why do you think God asked Cain about his brother? Are we responsible for one another's welfare?
11. What did God mention was crying out to him from the ground? (*Abel's blood spilled on the ground by the hand of Cain.*)
12. What did God say was going to happen to Cain as a result of his rash act? (*Cain was now under a curse, the ground would no longer yield its crops for Cain, he would be driven from that place where his parents lived, and would become a restless wanderer upon the earth.*)
13. What did Cain say about his punishment resulting from killing his brother? (*My punishment is more than I can bear. I am afraid that someone will find me and kill me—take revenge.*)
14. How did God express his love for Cain? (*By protecting him with a mark so no one would harm Cain.*)
15. Who suffered in this story? Did Abel? Did Cain? Did Adam and Eve? Later when Adam again lay with his wife Eve she conceived and God gave them another son named Seth. Eve said, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." After Seth was born Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters in fulfillment of God's commandment to be fruitful and increase in number.
16. **Read** 1Jn 3:12 and talk about what this says about Cain and who he listened to—was it God's warning to him or Satan's urging to act wickedly against his brother?
17. **Read** Heb 11:4 and talk about what this says about Abel and his offering. Then read 1Sa 16:7 and talk about what God sees in our heart.
18. **Read** the warnings in 1Pe 5:8 and Jam 1:13-15. Who tempts us to sin? Who is to blame when we yield to temptation and fall into sin and suffer? Do we cause our suffering by our sin? Does our sin cause others to suffer as well?

Read Matthew 5:23 (*but don't mention who said it*) and ask what attitude God requires in the heart of the worshiper. Do you think Cain had the right attitude in his heart?

A Verse to Remember: "...You will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against

you. I, the Lord, have spoken...” Numbers 14:34b, 35a

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 6:1-9:17; Job 22:15-18; Psalm 34:15; 53:2-3; Ezekiel 14:12-14, 18; Amos 3:7; Matthew 24:37-39; 1Peter 3:20; 2Peter 2:5

Talk About These Things:

1. Does God know all that we say and do?
2. In whose image was man first created?
3. What do you suppose is God's feeling when He sees man thinking and living wickedly?
4. What have we learned in the first stories about suffering? What does suffering result from?
5. What if we are obedient and do right, then will we suffer for our sin?
6. Does God deliver us if we obey him so that we do not suffer?

Read From Bible: Genesis 6:5-8, 22; 7:23

Tell the Story:**The Days of Noah—A Wicked People Suffered and Died**

Adam had many sons and daughters. People lived a long time in those days. Even though some of Adam's descendants were righteous, that is, they lived lives pleasing to God, there was increasing evil and wickedness on the earth. God saw the great wickedness so He said, "My Spirit will not struggle with man forever, for man is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." So God set a time for the people to repent from their sin. God saw that every inclination of the thoughts of the heart was only evil all the time. (*Psalm 53:2-3*) So God was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. God said, "I will destroy mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah, a descendent of Seth, the son of Adam found favor in the eyes of God, for God does not take his eyes off the righteous. (*Psalm 34:15*) Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God—that is, he lived a life that was pleasing to God.

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both the people and the earth. So make for yourself an ark (*large boat*); make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. I am going to bring floodwaters upon the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you. You are to bring into the ark one pair of each kind of animal, a male and female, and seven pairs of clean animals. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and the animals. Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah preached that the people must be righteous, but the people did not listen as he was preparing the ark. They continued to eat and drink, giving in marriage and being given in marriage right up to the day God told Noah to take his wife, his sons and their wives, and the animals and go into the ark. For God said, "Seven days from now I am going to send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth

every living creature I have made.” So Noah did what God commanded him. He took his wife and his three sons and their wives into the ark to escape the floodwaters. Noah brought in the animals as God had commanded him. Then God closed the door and shut them in. Seven days later the rain began to fall.

For forty days and nights the flood waters kept rising on the earth until they filled the valleys and rose above the highest mountains. The ark floated on the waters and all inside were safe. But every living thing that had the breath of life in it on the ground outside perished—men and women, animals and birds. Only Noah and those with him in the ark remained. The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. But God remembered Noah and those with him and sent a wind over the earth to dry up the waters. When the waters had receded, Noah sent out a dove who returned with a fresh leaf in its beak. Then God said to Noah, “Come out of the ark, you and your wife, your sons and their wives. Bring out all the animals and creatures so they can multiply and replenish the earth.”

When Noah came out he built an altar and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God who was pleased and promised: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done.” Then God blessed Noah and his sons and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. Everything that lives and moves will now be food for you. Just as I gave you green plants for your food in the beginning, now I give you everything. But you must not eat meat that still has its lifeblood still in it.”

So God established his covenant saying, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature, a covenant for all generations. I have set my rainbow in the clouds and it will be a sign. Whenever it appears I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures.” From the three sons of Noah and their wives came all the peoples who were scattered over the whole earth.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Did God see the wickedness of the people in Noah’s day? (*Yes. God saw their wickedness in behavior and what was in their hearts.*)
2. Did God see the righteous as well? (*Yes. God saw that Noah was righteous in his day.*)
3. What do you think it means that “Noah walked with God”? (*He lived a life pleasing to God.*)
4. What did God tell Noah to do to save himself, his family and the animals? (*Build an ark.*)
5. Did Noah do what God commanded him to do? (*Yes. He did everything God asked.*)
6. Did the people living in that day listen to God’s words and turn from their sin? (*No*)
7. Were any of the other people outside of Noah’s family saved? (*No. They did not listen to God’s words.*)
8. Could anyone escape God’s judgment? (*No. It was inescapable and complete.*)
9. What does God’s judgment say about sin? (*God hates sin and punishes the sinner.*)
10. How did God show his mercy in the story? (*He revealed to Noah what was about to happen and what Noah must do to save his family and escape the suffering and death in the flood.*)
11. Were Noah and his family and animals safe in the ark? (*Yes. God shut them in.*)
12. Were the people and animals outside able to escape by entering the ark. (*No. God shut them out.*)
13. When God’s judgment was finished, did God remember Noah and those with him? (*Yes.*)
14. What did Noah do upon leaving the ark? (*He built an altar and offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God who was pleased.*)
15. What did God promise to Noah through a covenant? (*Never to destroy all people and animals again by flood.*)
16. What can we say about a life of wickedness and evil? Where does it lead? (*To suffering and ruin.*)
17. **Read** Psa 1. Talk about the two paths and the two kinds of people. Which one is pleasing to

God? Which one is going to suffer for his wickedness?
18. When God looks at your life what does He see? In Noah's day, would you have lived or died?

A Verse to Remember: "For every living soul; belongs to me, the father as well as the son—both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die." Ezekiel 18:4

Scriptures to Study: Job 1:1-2:13; 16:19-21; 19:25-26; 42:7-17; Zechariah 3:1-2

Talk About These Things:

1. What are some of the causes of suffering? Some of our friends say that suffering is caused by our desires. Do you agree?
2. What if a good person—one who has not done anything bad or wrong, happens to suffer?
3. What would you say to such a person? Could you comfort them? Would you be wondering what they had done to deserve God's punishment?
4. Our story today is about a righteous man who did suffer because someone wanted him to turn and curse God in spite of all God's blessings. Listen and see what happened.

Read From Bible: Job 1:1-12 (*This is a long reading but it establishes the story.*)

Tell the Story:**Satan Causes A Righteous Man To Suffer**

Job was an upright and righteous man who feared God and shunned evil. He was very wealthy as God had greatly blessed Job. When Job's children would have a feast with eating and drinking he was concerned that they may have offended God in some way. So Job would offer a sacrifice to purify them and ask God's forgiveness for any wrongdoing by his children.

One day when the angels came to present themselves before God, Satan was there, too. God said to Satan, "See my servant Job, there is no one on earth like him. He is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." Then Satan accused Job saying, "Does Job fear God for no reason? You have put a hedge about him and his household. You have blessed Job and made him very wealthy. But if you take away all that you have given Job, then he will curse you to your face."

"Very well, then," God said to Satan, "everything Job has is in your hands. But do not touch Job himself." Then Satan went out from God's presence.

So Satan began to cause Job to suffer. One day while Job's sons and daughters were feasting at the oldest brother's house a messenger came to Job to say that enemies had carried off his donkeys and killed his servants. While that messenger was still speaking another came to say that fire fell from the sky and burned up his sheep and shepherds. Soon another messenger arrived to say that enemies had come to carry off Job's camels and killed more servants. Finally another messenger arrived to tell Job that a mighty wind from the desert struck the house where his sons and daughters were feasting; the house collapsed and killed them all. When Job heard these reports he got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped God saying: "The Lord gave me all this and the Lord has taken it away. May the name of the Lord be praised." In all this Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

On another day when the angels were presenting themselves before God Satan came with them. Again God said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him. He is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." Then Satan said, "Skin for skin! A man will give all he has for his own life. Stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and

he will surely curse you to your face.” “Very well,” God said, “Job is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

So Satan went out from the presence of God and afflicted Job so that he was covered in painful sores from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. Job sat among the ashes and scraped his sores with a piece of broken pottery. Job’s wife said to him, “Curse God and die!” But Job replied, “You foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

Three of Job’s friends heard about his terrible affliction and came to visit him. They accused Job of hiding some sin in his life and so God was punishing him. But their words, instead of comforting Job, only accused him and increased his agony in suffering. One accused Job saying, “When your children sinned against God, He gave them over to the penalty of their sin.” Another said, “My beliefs are without error and I am pure in your sight. Oh, how I wish that God would speak and open his lips against you.” Another said, “All his days the wicked man suffers torment...”

Job replied, “What miserable comforters you are! Men open their mouths to jeer at me; they strike my cheek in scorn and unite together against me.” But Job added, “Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God...I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh will I see God...How my heart yearns within me!”

Finally God spoke to Job out of a mighty storm proclaiming his majesty and reminding Job that God alone was the Sovereign God who ruled over all the earth.. Job confessed, “I know that you can do all things, no plan of yours can be turned aside. I repent in dust and ashes.” Then God said, “I am angry with your foolish friends who have not spoken rightly of me. Pray for your friends and offer a sacrifice so that I will not deal with them according to their folly.”

After Job had offered a sacrifice and prayed for his friends, God accepted his prayer. Then God made Job prosperous again and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known Job came and ate with him in his house. They comforted Job and consoled him. So God blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the first with very large flocks of sheep, herds of camels, oxen and donkeys. And God gave Job seven sons and three daughters who were the most beautiful in all the land. Afterwards Job lived a long life and so he died full of years.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What kind of man was Job? (*A righteous and upright man.*)
2. Was God pleased with Job? (*Yes, he saw that Job was righteous.*)
3. What was Satan’s accusation against God and Job? (*Job feared God because of the possessions and blessings God had given Job.*)
4. What did God permit Satan to do? (*Take away Job’s possessions.*)
5. Did Job curse God as Satan said he would? (*No. Instead he praised God.*)
6. What then did Satan say to God? (*Inflict his flesh and bones, then he will curse you.*)
7. Did God put a limit on what Satan could do to Job? (*Yes. Satan could not kill Job.*)
8. Who is more powerful, God or Satan?
9. What did Job’s wife and friends have to say? (*Curse God and die. You are suffering because of your sins.*)
10. Did Job lose hope? (*No. He trust God to one day redeem his life. He even expressed his desire to see God. But Job did not accuse God of any wrongdoing.*)
11. Was God pleased with the foolish words of Job’s friends? (*No.*)
12. What did God ask Job to do on behalf of his friends and their foolish words? (*Pray for them and offer a sacrifice for their forgiveness.*)
13. Did God restore Job’s possessions and health? (*Yes. God was very generous toward Job.*)
14. Who caused Job to suffer? (*Satan*) Who blessed Job and restored his life? (*God*)

Note: *We’ll see that sometimes God allows us to suffer so that God might be glorified, and sometimes*

the suffering God permits is to make us stronger. But we must be careful not to do evil and suffer for it.

A Verse to Remember: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth...I will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” Job 19:25, 27

SARAH'S IMPATIENCE CAUSES SUFFERING

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 12:10-20; 16:1-16; 17:23-26; 21:8-21 (Galatians 4:21-31 *This is for your study only, do not teach from it now.*)

Talk About These Things:

1. Are you an impatient person? You don't like to wait for others or for something promised to happen?
2. Do you know people who are impatient? If something doesn't happen when they think it should, they try to cause it to happen?
3. What if our impatience causes suffering for ourselves and for others? Who is to blame?
4. In our story today we will see that when someone was impatient with God, she tried to help God to fulfill his promise. But it caused problems for her and for others.

Read From Bible: Genesis 16:1-5

Tell the Story:**Sarah's Impatience Causes Suffering**

God had called Abraham to leave his homeland to go to a land that God would give him and his descendants. God promised many descendants though Abraham and his wife Sarah were childless and now were old. When a famine came upon the land where Abraham was living, he took his wife Sarah and journeyed down to Egypt. Fearful that the king of Egypt would see Sarah who was beautiful and desire her for his wife and kill Abraham, he asked Sarah to tell the king that she was his sister. So it happened that Sarah was taken to be the wife of the Egyptian king. But God was not pleased and caused diseases among the king's household. When he learned the truth about Abraham and Sarah, the king sent them out of Egypt along with the gifts he had given to Abraham—cattle and sheep, donkeys, camels and menservants and maidservants.

Ten years had passed and still Abraham had no children. Sarah had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar. So she said to Abraham, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant so I can build a family through her." Abraham agreed to what Sarah said. When Hagar the maidservant knew that she was with child, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarah said to Abraham, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. Now my servant despises me." "Do with your servant whatever you think best," Abraham answered. Then Sarah mistreated Hagar and she ran away.

The angel of the Lord found her near a spring in the desert and said to her, "Hagar, servant girl of Sarah, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress," Hagar replied. Then the angel of the Lord told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her. I will so increase your descendants that they will be too many to count." The angel also said to Hagar, "You are now with child and will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the Lord has heard of your suffering." Hagar gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her, "You are the God who sees me." So Hagar bore Abraham a son when he was eighty-six years old. Abraham gave the name Ishmael to the boy. When Ishmael was thirteen years old Abraham obeyed God's command to

circumcise all the males in his household.

Two years later Abraham also had a son by Sarah. On the day Sarah's son was being weaned Abraham held a great feast. Sarah saw that Ishmael the son of Hagar was mocking her child. So she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son." The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through your son by Sarah that your offspring will be counted. I will make the son of the maidservant Hagar into a nation also because he is your son.

Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. So he sent her off with her son. They wandered about in the desert until all the water in the skin was gone. Then Hagar put her son under a bush and she went off and sat down nearby and thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." As she sat there she began to cry.

God heard her and the boy crying, and the angel of God called out from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. Lift the boy up by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." Then God opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. While he was living in the desert, his mother got him a wife from Egypt.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. What had God promised to give Abraham? (*Many descendants.*)
2. How many children did Abraham have? (*None.*) Do you think God would fulfill his promise to Abraham?
3. What did Sarah hope to do through her maidservant Hagar? (*Have children which she would count as her own.*)
4. What happened after Hagar conceived and knew she was with child? (*She despised Sarah.*)
5. When Sarah mistreated Hagar what did she do? (*Ran away.*) Who found Hagar? (*God's angel.*)
6. What did the angel say to do? (*Return and submit to her mistress.*)
7. What did the angel of God promise Hagar? (*She would have a son and name him Ishmael and God would give him many descendants, too.*)
8. Did God honor his promise to Hagar? (*Yes. A son was born and named Ishmael.*)
9. Later when Sarah had a son of her own, what happened? (*Ishmael was mocking Sarah's son.*)
10. When Sarah demanded that Hagar and her son be sent away, how did Abraham feel about it? (*He was greatly distressed because it concerned his son.*)
11. What did God tell Abraham to do? (*To listen to Sarah because it was through her son that Abraham's descendants would be counted.*)
12. What did Abraham do for Hagar and Ishmael? (*He provided food and water and sent them off.*)
13. When the water was gone Hagar put her son under a bush to die and she began to cry. Did God hear her and the boy crying? (*Yes. He heard and his angel called out to Hagar from heaven.*)
14. What promise did God again make to Hagar? (*God would make her son into a great nation.*)
15. What else did God do for Hagar to end her suffering? (*God provided water for Hagar and her son.*)
16. Did God fulfill his promises to Hagar? Read Genesis 25:12-17.
17. When you face suffering and cry out, do you think God hears you?
18. Is God able to help you when you suffer?
19. Does God keep his promises?
20. Have you caused another person to suffer? What should you do about it? What would God do about it?

A Verse to Remember: “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry...He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and hear and put their trust in the Lord.” Psalm 40:1, 3

ABRAHAM—HIS DESCENDANT WOULD BLESS MANY

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 11:27-12:8; 15:1-6; 21:1-7; 22:1-18 (*See also Nehemiah 9:7-8; Acts 7:2-5, Joshua 24:2-3; Galatians 3:16, but don't mention Christ as this time.*)

Talk About These Things:

1. Has anyone made a promise to you that they did not keep? Why were they not able to keep their promise? Did they not have the power or honor to keep their promise?
2. Have you ever made a promise that you were unable to keep? Can you share why you didn't?
3. Does God always keep his promises? Can you think of any promises God has made?
4. What if it seems impossible to fulfill a promise? Can God overcome what is impossible?

Read From Bible: Genesis 12:1-3; 22:17-18

Tell the Story:**Abraham—His Descendant Would Bless Many**

When God judged the sin of the serpent in the Garden of Eden He said that one day a son of woman would crush the head of the serpent. When Cain killed his righteous brother, God gave Adam and Eve another son Seth who was righteous. Noah was descended from Seth. Then among Noah's three sons the one named Shem was the ancestor of Abraham. Now Abraham's father was an idol-worshiper in another land. God called Abraham to leave his country and his people and his father's household, and go to a land God would show him. Abraham's wife Sarah had no children.

When Abraham left that place he was already an old man of seventy-five years. His wife Sarah was also old at sixty-five years. God said to Abram, for that was his name before God changed it, "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Abraham had traveled in the land where God led him and there he built an altar and worshiped.

After some years had passed Abraham still had no son. He cried out to God, "O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me? You have given me no children." Then the word of the Lord came to Abraham, "You will have a son born to you of your own seed who will be your heir. Look up at the heavens and count the stars—so shall your offspring be." Abraham believed God, and so it was credited to him as righteousness.

Some time later God changed Abraham's name from Abram—exalted father, to Abraham—father of many nations. God also changed Sarah's name and said, "I will bless your wife Sarah and give you a son by her. I will bless her so she will be the mother of nations." Abraham fell on his face and laughed to himself, "Will a son be born to a man who is one hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety? Then God said, "Yes, your wife will bear you a son and you will call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him." Later the angel of the Lord came to visit Abraham and said, "I will return about this time next year and Sarah your wife will have a son." When Sarah heard the words of the angel she laughed. The angel rebuked her saying, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?"

God was gracious to Sarah, and did for Sarah what He had promised. For Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son at the very time God had promised. Abraham named him Isaac and circumcised him when he was eight days old according to the covenant God made with Abraham.

Later when Isaac was older God tested Abraham. He called to him, "Abraham! "Here I am," Abraham replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to a place I will show you. There sacrifice him as a burnt offering." Early the next morning Abraham arose and went to cut some wood. Then taking two servants and his son Isaac, Abraham set out to the place of sacrifice. On the third day when he saw the place in the distance Abraham said to the two servants, "Remain here. The boy and I will go on. After we have worshiped, WE will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac.

Then Isaac spoke, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "Father, the fire and wood are here," Isaac asked, "but where is the lamb for the sacrifice?" "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham assured him.

At the appointed place Abraham built an altar and placed the wood upon it. Then he took his son Isaac and bound him and laid him upon the altar. Taking his knife in his hand he was about to slay his son. Suddenly, the angel of the Lord called out from heaven, "Abraham, do not harm your son. Now I know that you truly fear God, for you have not withheld your son. I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. And through your offspring (*or seed—see Galatians 3:16, 17*) all nations on earth will be blessed because you have obeyed me." The angel showed Abraham a sheep caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham sacrificed the sheep in place of his son Isaac and called that place "The Lord will provide."

Let's Talk Some More:

1. What can you say about Abraham's father? (*He was an idol-worshiper*)
2. What did God ask Abraham to do? (*Leave his country and people and go to a land God would show him.*)
3. What did God promise to do for Abraham? (*To bless him, make his name great, give him many descendants, and through him bless all peoples on earth.*)
4. Did Abraham and Sarah have any children at that time? (*No.*) Were they too old to have any children? (*Yes*)
5. How many descendants did God promise Abraham? (*They would be like the stars in heaven, too many to count.*)
6. What was Abraham's name before God changed it? (*Abram*) Why do you think God changed his name to Abraham? (*To show that God was going to fulfill his promise to give him a son.*)
7. Did Abraham believe God's promise to him? (*Yes. And God credited it to Abraham as righteousness.*)
8. Is anything too difficult for God to do for a person? (*No. God can do anything He promises to do for a person.*)
9. Did God fulfill his promise to Abraham and Sarah? (*Yes. At the very time God said it would happen Sarah conceived and gave birth to a son.*)
10. What did Abraham name his son? (*Isaac*) Do you know what that name means? (*Laughter*)
11. When God tested Abraham did he obey God? (*Yes. He was going to do what God asked.*)
12. Did Abraham trust God to save his son's life? (*Yes. He told the servants that after they had worshiped he and the boy (we) will return.*)
13. What did Abraham tell Isaac that God would provide? (*God himself will provide the lamb.*)
14. Did God fulfill his promise? (*Yes*)
15. Again what did God promise Abraham he would do? (*God would bless Abraham and give him many descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sands on the seashore.*)
16. What special promise was given about Abraham's offspring (seed)? (*Through him all nations on*

earth will be blessed.) Who do you think this offspring will be? (They will likely say their Prophet. Don't yet reveal the name of Jesus.)

A Verse to Remember: “And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.” Genesis 22:18

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 13:12, 13; 18:16-29; Amos 3:7; 2Pe 2:7-8

Talk About These Things:

1. Does God see all that we do? Is there anything about us that God does not know?
2. If we choose to do wicked things, what do you think God might do?
3. Do you know people or places where wicked things are done—things you know would be greatly displeasing to God?
4. What if you learned that God was going to severely punish wicked people who lived in a certain place and you had family members living there? Would you trust God to do what was right and to spare the righteous? If you asked God to spare your relatives, do you think He would hear your plea?
5. Must we always be careful to do what God says? What might happen if we do not?

Read From Bible: Genesis 18:16-17; 20-21; 19:29

Tell the Story:

Sodom & Gomorrah—Great Wickedness Brings God’s Judgment

When Abraham left his people to go to the land God was giving to him and his descendants, he took with him his nephew Lot. God had greatly blessed Abraham and all who were with him. Soon their flocks and herds were too large to remain in one place. There was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot. So Abraham said to Lot, “Let’s not have any quarreling between you and me. Let’s part company. If you go to the left I will go to the right.” Lot looked and saw that whole plain below was fertile and well watered like the Garden of the Lord. So he chose for himself the whole plain and set out for it. Abraham remained behind in the land of Canaan where God had promised to bless him. In the cities of the plain the men were very wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord. Lot pitched his tents near the city of Sodom and dwelled there.

At the time God sent three angels to tell Abraham that he would soon have a son, the angels had another mission. Two of the angels began to walk toward the city of Sodom where the men were sinning greatly. The angel of the Lord remained behind to tell Abraham that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was so bad that he had come to see for himself. Then Abraham said to the angel of the Lord, “Will you sweep away the righteous along with the wicked? And so Abraham bargained with the angel to spare the righteous when the cities were destroyed.

The two angels soon arrived in Sodom and prepared to spend the night in the city square. But Lot saw them and said it was not safe to sleep there. They should instead come to his house. After they had eaten and were preparing for bed, the men of Sodom, both young and old, surrounded Lot’s house and demanded that he bring out his guests so they could have sex with them. “No, my friends,” Lot said, “how could you do such a wicked thing? Take my two daughters instead and do with them what you like. Don’t do anything to these men who have come under the protection of my roof.”

“Get out of our way!” the men shouted. And they kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. The angels inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house

and shut the door. Then the angels struck the men outside with blindness so they could not find the door. “Do you have any family members or relatives here in the city?” the angels asked Lot. “If so, get them out of here, because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the Lord is so great that He has sent us to destroy it.” When Lot tried to tell the young men who were his sons-in-law pledged to marry his daughters, they laughed and thought Lot was joking.

With the coming of dawn the angels urged Lot to take his wife and two daughters and quickly flee to the mountains, so they would not be swept away in the destruction when the city was punished. When Lot hesitated, the angels grabbed his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and led them safely out of the city. Then the angels said, “Flee to the mountains; don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain or you’ll be swept away, too.” Lot begged instead to go to a small nearby town. The angel granted his request but urged him to hurry.

With the coming of dawn the Lord began to rain down burning sulfur on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The cities and their people were destroyed along with all the vegetation in the plain. But as they were fleeing, Lot’s wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

So when God destroyed the wicked people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah he remembered Abraham and brought his nephew Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot and his family had lived.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Why did Abraham and his nephew Lot choose to separate? *(They had too many flocks and herds to remain together. And their herdsmen were quarreling.)*
2. Did Lot choose to remain in the land of Canaan where they lived, or to go out to a nearby plain? *(Lot chose to leave Canaan and to dwell in the plain near the city of Sodom.)*
3. What were the men of Sodom doing that displeased God? *(Sinning greatly, probably homosexually.)*
4. When Abraham learned what the angel of the Lord what was going to happen to Sodom, what did he begin to do? *(Abraham was concerned that his nephew Lot and his family would be swept away in the destruction of Sodom, so he bargained with the Lord to be sure that the righteous would be spared.)*
5. When the angels arrived in Sodom, what did they plan to do? *(Spend the night in the city square.)* What did Lot say to them? *(It was not safe there, they should instead come to his house.)*
6. What were the young and old men of Sodom demanding of Lot? *(To bring out his guests so they could have sex with them.)* How did Lot try to please them? *(His offered his daughters instead.)*
7. When the men threatened to break into Lot’s house what did the angels do? *(They pulled Lot back inside and then caused the men outside to become blind so they could not find the door.)*
8. How did the angels show their concern for Lot’s family? *(They asked if he had any other family members in the city.)* When Lot went to tell the young men what was about to happen, what did they think? *(That Lot was only joking.)*
9. When Lot hesitated about leaving what did the angels do? *(They took Lot and his wife and daughters by the hand to lead them to safety out of the city.)*
10. What instruction did the angels give to Lot? *(Flee to the mountains and don’t look back.)*
11. Did all of Lot’s family obey the instructions of the angels? *(No. His wife turned to look back and was turned into a pillar of salt.)*
12. Did God destroy the city as He said He would do? *(Yes. He destroyed the city and all vegetation in the plain.)*
13. What can we say about God in regard to wickedness? *(God hates wickedness and punishes it.)*
14. What can we say about the mercy of God for the righteous? *(God provided an escape for the righteous if they obeyed what He said to do.)*

15. If you had lived in Sodom like Lot, would you have listened to the words of the angels to flee?
16. Do you think Lot made a wise choice about where to live?
17. Do you think that Abraham cared for Lot and his family?
18. Does God care for you and your family?

A Verse to Remember: “For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.” Psalm 1:6

JACOB—DECEPTION BRINGS SUFFERING

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 25:21-34; 27:1-28:9, 14-15; 29:14-29; 30:1-2, 22-24; 31:41; 32:7; 33:4

Talk About These Things:

1. Has anyone ever deceived you? Have you ever deceived anyone?
2. Do you think deception is an honorable or dishonorable thing to do?
3. Would you deceive your own father?
4. Have you ever coveted what belonged to another? What did you do? Did you find some clever way to get what you wanted?
5. How might one suffer after deceiving another or taking what rightfully belonged to another?

Read From Bible: Genesis 25:31-33; 27:21-23

Tell the Story:**Jacob—Deception Brings Suffering**

After Isaac the son of Abraham married Rebekah she was barren for twenty years. Then Isaac prayed for his wife and God opened her womb. Soon twin boys were born, the first red and hairy and was named Esau. The second twin was born grasping the heel of his brother, so he was named Jacob or “One who desires the place of another”. Esau the firstborn was the favorite of his father and fond of hunting while Jacob was a quiet man who preferred the tents of his mother.

One day when Esau returned from hunting he had found nothing and was very hungry. Jacob was cooking some red stew. “Give me some of that stew,” he said. “First, sell me your birthright (*the right to a double portion belonging to the firstborn son*). Esau said, “I am about to die, what good is a birthright to me?” So he swore an oath selling his birthright to Jacob. After Esau had eaten and drank his fill he went on his way. So in that way he despised his birthright.

Some time later Isaac, who was now old and blind, thought he would soon die. So he called Esau to him and asked his favorite son to go and find some wild game and prepare some tasty food to eat. Esau departed to the open country to hunt. Rebekah the mother heard the words of Isaac and called her favorite son Jacob and said, “Your father is about to give his blessing to Esau. Now go and kill two goats and bring them to me so I may prepare some food for your father and he will give you his blessing. When the food was ready Rebekah put some of Esau’s best clothing on Jacob. And he went to his father and said, “Father, sit up and eat some of my wild game so that you may give me your blessing.” Isaac asked, “Who is it?” for he was blind. Jacob said, “I am Esau your firstborn, I have done as you told me. Now eat and bless me.” Then Isaac said, “Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” So Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, “You have the voice of Jacob, are you really my son Esau?” “I am,” Jacob replied. After Isaac had eaten he blessed Jacob instead of Esau. Then Jacob left his father and Esau returned. When he learned what had happened he begged his father to bless him also, but the blessing had already been given to Jacob. So Esau thought to kill his brother Jacob after his father had died.

When Rebekah learned of Esau’s thinking she said to Jacob, “Flee to your uncle Laban at once and stay there until Esau’s anger has passed. To her husband Isaac she said, “I am disgusted with living

because of these local wives of Esau. If Jacob marries one of these local women like Esau did, then my life is not worth living.” So Isaac agreed to send Jacob off to live with his uncle and there to find a wife from among Rebekah’s relatives.

God had promised to watch over Jacob, to bless and prosper him and keep him safe. God also said that all peoples on earth would be blessed through him and his offspring. When Jacob desired to marry one of his uncle’s daughters, his uncle said he must work for seven years then he could have her. At the end of the agreed time Jacob asked for his wife. However, after the wedding feast when Jacob went into his wife, he found that it was her older sister! He was very angry with his uncle who deceived him and cleverly said that it was their custom for the oldest daughter to marry first. If Jacob would work another seven years then he could have the desired wife.

God opened the womb of the older sister Leah but not that of Jacob’s favorite wife Rachel. One day the barren wife accused Jacob saying, “Give me children or I will die!” Jacob said, “Am I God who has kept you from having children?” The sisters had quarreled with the older sister making a bargain to seek the favor of her husband for a night. God blessed Jacob and gave him twelve sons as He had done for Ishmael. Over the years as Jacob worked for his uncle he cleverly changed his wages ten times, but each time God caused Jacob to prosper instead.

Finally his uncle’s attitude was getting worse and worse toward Jacob who now possessed all of his uncle’s wealth. One day God told Jacob to return to the land of his father. Along the way Jacob feared that his brother Esau would take revenge upon him, killing him and his family. So he divided his family so that some might escape alive. But Esau’s anger had passed and he joyfully welcomed his brother Jacob, falling upon his neck and kissing him. Later as the second son of Jacob’s favorite wife Rachel was being born she died. The two sons of his favorite wife Rachel were Jacob’s favorite sons.

One day Jacob’s own sons of his other wives deceived him to believe that one of his favorite sons named Joseph had been killed by wild animals. For many years Jacob grieved and suffered until one day he learned that his son was still alive and that God had greatly blessed him in another land. But before that happened, Jacob suffered even more when he feared that he might also lose his favorite wife’s second son who was born when she died.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Did Esau value his birthright as the firstborn son? (*No. He quickly gave it up for a meal.*)
2. Did Jacob value the birthright of Esau? (*Yes. So he cleverly purchased it from Esau.*)
3. When Isaac was old and blind what did he want to do for Esau his firstborn son? (*To bless him.*)
4. When Isaac’s wife Rebekah heard what he was going to do, what did want Jacob to do? (*To go and deceive his father and get the blessing for himself.*)
5. Was Jacob able to successfully deceive his blind father? (*Yes. He lied to his father who could not see him.*)
6. What did Esau plan to do when he learned that his blessing had gone to Jacob instead? (*Kill him.*)
7. What did Rebekah then plan to do? (*Send Jacob off to live with his uncle until Esau’s anger had passed.*)
8. What was Rebekah’s clever plan to convince her husband Isaac to send Jacob away? (*She complained about Esau’s wives who were local women that Rebekah despised. She said it would be better to die than see Jacob marry a local woman.*)
9. After Jacob left home did God promise to watch over him and bless him? (*Yes.*)
10. Did Jacob suffer because of what he had done to his brother and father? (*Yes. He, too was deceived by his uncle in choice of wives and cheated in his wages ten times by his uncle.*)
11. What other suffering came to Jacob during his lifetime? (*He was deceived by his sons and thought he had lost a favorite son and later a second favorite son as well.*)
12. What can we learn about the consequences of our sinful behavior? Does it cause us to suffer even though God is blessing our lives? (*Yes. Sin always leads to consequences for us. Jacob suffered*

many years for things he did in his youth.)

13. Do you think your sin (*wrongdoing in God's eyes*) may lead to suffering?

14. What if someone were willing to take your suffering upon himself and suffer in your place?

A Verse to Remember: “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”
Isaiah 53:5

JOSEPH TRUSTED GOD IN HIS SUFFERING

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 30:22-24; 35:16-18; 37:1-36; 39:1-47:12

Talk About These Things:

1. Have you ever suffered when you were in the right? You said something that was right or true but you suffered because you said it.
2. Have you ever suffered unjustly when you were falsely accused for something you did not do?
3. Do you believe that God can bless us even in our times of suffering?
4. Would you ever cause another person to suffer because of jealousy? Or anger?

Read From Bible: Genesis 37:23-28; 39:11-23 (*This is a long reading but covers the basic suffering.*)

Tell the Story:**Joseph Trusted God In His Suffering**

Joseph was the first son born to Jacob's favorite wife Rachel after God opened her womb. Later she had a second son Benjamin as she was dying. Jacob loved the sons of his favorite wife Rachel more than his other sons. Because of this the other sons were jealous and despised Joseph. When Joseph had some dreams about his family, his brothers became even more angry. In Joseph's dreams his brothers bowed down to him. When Jacob's older sons were out with their flocks he sent Joseph to see how they were getting along. Joseph wore a beautiful coat his father had given him. When the brothers saw him coming they said, "Here comes that dreamer! Let's kill him!" Instead they sold Joseph to some traders going down to Egypt. The brothers tore Joseph's coat and sprinkled goat blood on it and sent it back to his father who grieved thinking Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Joseph had now been sold to an Egyptian master, who placed Joseph in charge of his household, because he saw that God was blessing Joseph and prospering everything he did. Soon the wife of his master desired for Joseph to sleep with her, but he refused. When he fled from the woman leaving behind his cloak, she accused Joseph before her husband who angrily had Joseph put in prison. But God was with Joseph and so he found favor in the prison keeper's eyes and was placed in charge of the other prisoners.

One day some of the prisoners had dreams which Joseph was able to interpret with God's help. Joseph told the servant of the king who was being released to remember him before the king of Egypt. But the man forgot, so Joseph remained in prison a long time. One day the king of Egypt had a dream that no one could interpret. Then the servant of the king remembered Joseph in prison. The king had Joseph brought out and told him the dream. Joseph said it was God who helped him to interpret dreams. Then Joseph said there was going to be seven years of plentiful food followed by seven years of famine. The king was pleased with Joseph's interpretation and placed him in charge of gathering food during the good years so there would be food during the lean years.

When the famine came there was no food in the land where Joseph's father and brothers lived. So Jacob sent his older sons to Egypt to buy food. They were brought before Joseph who recognized them, but they did not recognize Joseph who accused his brothers of being spies. The brothers tried to explain that they had been twelve but one was no more, and the other who was young was with his

father. Joseph kept one of the brothers in prison as a hostage and sent the others off with their food. He told them not to return without their younger brother to prove they were telling the truth. For Joseph longed to see his brother Benjamin.

When the brothers returned home and told Jacob what happened and how one of the brothers was kept in Egypt and they were not to return without Benjamin the youngest, Jacob began to cry out, “You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more! Simeon is no more! Now you want to take Benjamin! Everything is against me!” In time their food was gone and they had to go back to Egypt to buy more. The brothers said, “The man in Egypt warned us solemnly, ‘You will not see my face again unless your younger brother is with you.’” Jacob grieved saying, “May God grant you mercy before the man, so he will let your other brother and Benjamin return home. I am bereaved. I am bereaved.”

When Joseph saw his younger brother Benjamin he was overcome with emotion and left the room to weep. Later he invited his brothers to his house to eat a meal and arranged their seating from the oldest to the youngest. The brothers wondered how this Egyptian man knew their ages and were fearful they were to be taken as slaves. Then Joseph ordered the Egyptian servants out of the room and he revealed himself to his brothers, “I am Joseph your brother!” The older brothers were filled with fear thinking Joseph would now take revenge on them. But they had already been punished enough, thinking that all this trouble had come upon them because of what they did to Joseph.

When Jacob heard that Joseph was alive and well in Egypt he could hardly believe it. Joseph sent for his father and brothers to come and live in Egypt. The king gave them the best land for their flocks. There they settled and lived a long time until one day the suffering began again. After their father Jacob died the brothers again feared Joseph would punish them so the brothers threw themselves down before him saying, “We are your slaves!” But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to save your lives.”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Who were the favorite sons of Jacob? (*Joseph and Benjamin.*)
2. Why did Joseph’s older brothers despise him? (*They were jealous that he was his father’s favorite. They were angry about Joseph’s dreams when he said they would bow down to him.*)
3. What did the brothers intend to do to Joseph? (*They planned to kill him.*)
4. Instead what happened to Joseph? (*He was sold to traders who then sold him as a servant to an Egyptian master.*)
5. Did God bless Joseph in Egypt? (*Yes. Even Joseph’s master saw that God blessed him.*)
6. Why was Joseph falsely accused? (*Because he would not sin against his master and his wife.*)
7. What happened to Joseph when he was accused? (*He was put in prison.*) Did God bless Joseph in prison? (*Yes. The prison warden saw this and placed Joseph in charge of the other prisoners.*)
8. What special gift had God given to Joseph? (*With God’s help he could interpret dreams.*)
9. When Joseph interpreted the king’s dream, how did the king reward Joseph? (*He placed him in charge of gathering food during the good years and distributing food during the lean years.*)
10. When the brothers came to Egypt to buy food what happened? (*Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize Joseph. Joseph accused them of being spies. To prove they were telling the truth about their family they were to bring their younger brother back next time they came.*)
11. When Jacob heard what happened what did he say to the brothers? (*You have deprived me of my children! Joseph is no more! Simeon is no more! And now Benjamin will be no more!*)
12. When the brothers returned a second time to buy food did they take Benjamin with them as Joseph asked? (*Yes.*)
13. When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers were they happy to see him? (*No. They were afraid Joseph was going to take revenge.*) What did he say to reassure them? (*What they intended for harm God intended for good to save their lives.*)
14. If you were Joseph would you have forgiven your brothers?
15. If the same bad things had happened to make you suffer, would you still trust God to bless you?

16. If you've done something bad to make another person suffer, what should you do after hearing this story?

A Verse to Remember: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Matthew 6:15

ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS SUFFERED IN EGYPT

Scriptures to Study: Gen 15:13-16; 46:3-4; 47:27; 50:20-21, 24; Exo 1:1-22; Psa 105:24-25

Talk About These Things:

1. A prophet named Jeremiah said these words: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me if you seek me with all your heart." (*Jeremiah 29:11-13*) What do you think God means by these words?
2. If we suffer, does that mean God does not love us?
3. Is our suffering for a purpose? Could our suffering be for God's glory when He delivers us?
4. Could our suffering be to turn our hearts toward God, to cry out to him for help?
5. Are you suffering now? How?

Read From Bible: Exodus 1:6-14

Tell the Story:**Abraham's Descendants Suffered In Egypt**

Back in the days of Abraham, at a time when Abraham was asking God for assurance that God would give him a son, God caused Abraham to fall into a deep sleep. Then God appeared to Abraham and said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterwards they will come out with great possessions. For the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure." Now the Amorites were the people then living in the land. Do you remember the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities that God sent his angels to destroy? Those were the kind of people then living in the land. God saw their wickedness and would give them a time to repent before sending his judgment against them. But during this time it was God's plan to remove Abraham's descendants so they would not become corrupted by the Amorites. Remember that Rebekah, Esau's mother, was disgusted with his wives from among the local women. (*See Gen 27:46; 28:8*)

So it happened during the days of Jacob and his sons that Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt and was raised to become second only to the king of Egypt. After Joseph was reunited with his brothers he moved their father and all their families to live in Egypt. The king of Egypt gave them the best land for their herds and flocks. There God prospered them and they began to increase in number from the twelve families of Jacob's sons and their wives and children. The years passed. Jacob had died after blessing his sons. Later Joseph, too, died. The descendants of Abraham continued to increase.

Then a new king, who did not know Joseph and his family, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the descendants of Abraham have become much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous. And, if war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us and then leave the country."

So the Egyptians put slave masters over the people to oppress them with forced labor, and they

built for the king two cities for storing grain. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to fear the descendants of Abraham and worked them ruthlessly. They made their lives bitter with hard labor making bricks and mixing mortar, all kinds of work in the fields. In all their hard labor the Egyptians worked them without mercy.

Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, “When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.”

The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt told them to do. Instead, they let the boys live. Then the king summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

The midwives answered the king, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women, they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” So God was kind to the midwives and gave them families of their own.

The Hebrews continued to increase in number. Then the king gave this order to all his people: “Every boy baby that is born you must throw into the river, but let every girl live.”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What did God tell Abraham would happen one day to his descendants? (*They would go to live in a land not their own where they would be enslaved.*)
2. What did God say about the Amorite people then living in the land of Canaan? (*Their sin had not yet reached its full measure.*) What do you think that means?
3. When did Abraham’s descendants go to live in Egypt? (*It happened during the days of Jacob and his sons when Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt.*)
4. Do you believe that God was in control of all that happened to Joseph and his family? (*Remember that Joseph said what the brothers had intended for harm God intended for their good.*)
5. Did God fulfill his promise to bless Abraham’s descendants while they lived in Egypt? (*Yes.*)
6. When the Egyptians began to fear Abraham’s descendants and pressed them into slavery, was God still blessing them? (*Yes.*) In what way? (*They were having many children, increasing in number and spreading.*)
7. What were the Egyptians doing to the descendants of Abraham? (*Working them ruthlessly.*)
8. Did God know what was happening to the Hebrews, the descendants of Abraham? (*Yes.*)
9. What did the king ask the Hebrew midwives to do whenever they assisted a woman giving birth? (*Kill the boy babies; let the girl babies live.*)
10. What did the midwives do instead of obeying the king’s order? (*Let the boy babies live.*)
11. How did God reward the Hebrew midwives for their faithfulness and fear of God? (*He gave them families of their own.*)
12. Then what did the king order his Egyptian people to do? (*Every boy baby that is born (to the Hebrews) must be thrown into the river.*)
13. Do you think God still loved the descendants of Abraham?
14. If you were suffering like this, would you wonder if God loved you?
15. Do you think God will rescue his people—the descendants of Abraham?
16. If you knew that a time of great suffering was coming one day, would you do whatever God told you to do to escape it? There is a time of unending suffering coming for some people. But God has provided a way to escape it and enjoy his everlasting blessing.

Note: *The term “descendants of Abraham” has been used deliberately instead of “Israelite”. This may or may not be a problem for your listeners. Sometimes it is. You will notice that in Exodus the term Israelite begins to be used. If you do use this term in your stories you may want to go back and cover the time when God changed Jacob’s name to Israel—one who struggled with God and*

prevailed. It was a name God gave Jacob just as God gave Abraham a new name and Ishmael his name.

A Verse to Remember: “It is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than to suffer for doing evil.” 1Pe 3:17

Scriptures to Study: Exo 2:1-5:2, 22; 6:1, 5; 10:27-28; 14:13, 21-22

Talk About These Things:

1. Does God always keep his promises? Can anyone think of a time or place where God could not keep his promise?
2. What if a person did not want to listen to God's words? What do you think might happen?
3. Is God patient when we are stubborn and do not do what He wants us to do?
4. Do you think there is an end to God's patience when He will no longer permit us to resist him?
5. Has anyone in the group ever resisted God, not wanting to do what God wanted you to do?
6. If no one, are you sure? One day you may be surprised to find out that you haven't been listening.

Read From Bible: Exo. 3:7-10

Tell the Story:**God Chose Moses To Deliver His People From Suffering**

God had told Abraham what would happen one day when his descendants would live in another land and be enslaved. But God promised to deliver them and bring them back to the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendants. So it had begun to happen during the days of Jacob and his sons when Joseph was taken to Egypt as a slave.

God had promised to bless Abraham's descendants and make them like the stars in the heavens—too many to count. While in Egypt God was blessing the people who were sometimes called Hebrews after one of their ancestors. But when a new king came to the throne he did not remember Joseph or what he had done to provide food for the people of Egypt. Instead, the new king feared Abraham's people and decided to make them slaves, to force them to work hard, and to kill their boy babies. The people had cried out in their misery and oppression.

During the time when boy babies were to be thrown into the river to die, a family already had a daughter and one son. Then a second son was born to Amram and Jochebed. The mother kept him hidden at home as long as she could. Then she made a little basket out of reeds and made it watertight and put her baby son in it and placed him in the river. His sister stood nearby to watch what would happen. Soon the daughter of the king came to bathe in the river and heard the baby crying. She gave him back to his own mother to be nursed and then raised him as her own son, as a prince. She named him Moses.

One day when he was grown Moses saw an Egyptian beating one of his own people. In anger Moses struck and killed the Egyptian. For this he had to flee out of Egypt and lived in the desert for a long time where he married and had two sons. He worked for his father-in-law as a shepherd. One day Moses saw a strange sight as a small tree appeared to be burning, and yet was not consumed. When he drew near a voice said to him, "Moses, take off your shoes, for you are standing in a holy place." When Moses asked who was speaking, the voice said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I have indeed seen the misery of my people in

Egypt. I have heard them crying because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. I am sending you to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring my people out.” When Moses asked God for his name in case anyone should ask who was sending him, God said, “I am Yahweh or Jehovah—the God who was, who is, and who is to come. Now, go, assemble the elders and tell them the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to you and said: ‘I have promised to bring you up out of your misery and suffering in Egypt, into the land I am giving you—a land flowing with milk and honey.’” God gave Moses his brother Aaron to act as his helper and spokesman.

When Moses appeared before Pharaoh king of Egypt and told him what God had said—to let the people go, Pharaoh said to Moses, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey him and let the people go? I do not know the Lord, and I will not let the people go.” Because Moses had asked to let the people go, Pharaoh was angry, and gave orders to make the Hebrews work even harder. Now the people and their leaders were angry with Moses, because of him their suffering was now greater.

Then God said to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of my mighty hand he will let the people go.” God told Moses what signs and wonders to perform before Pharaoh to demonstrate God’s mighty power. The river was turned to blood. There was a plague of frogs in their homes, their bodies were covered with boils, there was lightning and hail and locusts to destroy the Egyptian crops. There was disease on the Egyptian cattle who were worshiped as gods. Again and again Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go. Finally God pronounced a coming disaster on all the firstborn among the Egyptians. To escape God’s death angel the descendants of Abraham were to kill a sheep and sprinkle its blood on the sides and over the doors of their houses. On the appointed night God’s angel moved throughout the land and where there was the sign of blood the angel passed over that house. Where there was no sign of blood on the Egyptian houses, the angel killed the firstborn. Even Pharaoh’s firstborn son died.

Then Pharaoh sent word for Moses and the people to leave Egypt. But again Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army to bring the people back. God opened a way for them to escape through the sea to safety. When Pharaoh and his army tried to follow, the sea closed over them. God had said what He planned to do—to deliver Abraham’s descendants out of their slavery. And He kept his promise.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What had God told Abraham would happen to his descendants one day? (*They would become enslaved in another land.*)
2. What did God promise to do for the people? (*He promised to deliver them from their slavery and to punish the people who enslaved them.*)
3. Did God know about the suffering of Abraham’s descendants? (*Yes.*)
4. Do you think that God helped to save the life of the baby Moses? (*Yes. God protected his life.*)
5. When God spoke to Moses at the burning tree, whose God did He say He was? (*The God of Moses’ father Amram, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.*)
6. What did God want Moses to do? (*To go to the king of Egypt and tell him to let the people go.*)
7. When Moses asked God for his name, what did God tell him? (*I am Yahweh, the God who exists eternally.*) (*You may need to stop and talk about God’s holy name at this point. We know that “Allah” is derived from the ancient name the people had called God—“El” or the Mighty One.*)
8. When Moses went before Pharaoh to ask that he let the people go, what did Pharaoh say? (*Who is the Lord that I should obey him? I don’t know the Lord and I will not let the people go.*)
9. What did God say to Moses when Pharaoh refused to listen? (*Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of my mighty hand he will let the people go.*)
10. Did Pharaoh listen and obey God? (*No. He continued to harden his heart and would not obey.*)
11. What last disaster of judgment was God going to bring on the land of Egypt? (*He would kill their firstborn in each family.*)
12. Did God provide a way to escape his judgment upon the Egyptians? (*Yes. By the sign of blood on their houses Abraham’s people could escape God’s wrath.*)

13. Is God powerful to do what He says He will do?
14. Would you listen to what God has to say, or would you be like Pharaoh who hardened his heart?
15. If God showed you how to escape his wrath, would you obey God? Are you sure?

A Verse to Remember: “For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted ones who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.” Psa 72:12-14

THE BLOOD SACRIFICE FOR CLEANSING FROM SIN

Scriptures to Study: Gen 3:21; 4:10-11; 9:4; Exo 12:13; 29:19-21; 30:10; Lev 4:5-7; 16:14-16; 17:11; Heb 9:7, 22; 10:3-4

Talk About These Things:

1. When something becomes unclean what does it take to make it clean again?
2. What does blood represent? (*Life—but let the group guess and talk, don't reveal this yet.*)
3. Can something or someone who is innocent take the punishment for another's wrongdoing?
4. Would you be willing to take the suffering and possibly die for another's wrongdoing?
5. Who would do such a thing?

Read From Bible: Lev 17:11

Tell the Story:**The Blood Sacrifice For Cleansing From Sin**

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil they became ashamed and tried to hide their sinfulness by making clothing out of leaves. God provided better clothing for them from the skins of animals. This meant animals who were innocent of any wrongdoing—it was Adam and Eve who had disobeyed God—had to give their lives to cover the sin of Adam and Eve. To cover Adam and Eve's sin required the shedding of blood.

God called attention to the shed blood of Abel which cried out to him from the ground where it was spilled when his brother Cain killed him. In the days of Noah, when God allowed people to begin eating meat, He cautioned them to be careful always to drain the blood out of the animal before eating the meat. God had a special purpose for blood.

In the days of Moses when the descendants of Abraham were still in Egypt God brought judgment upon the people of Egypt. To escape God's judgment Abraham's descendants had to kill an animal and sprinkle its blood on the sideposts and over the doorway of their houses. The sign of blood would mark the family to be saved from the death angel who came to take the life of the firstborn. An innocent animal gave its blood to protect the family.

Later God gave to Moses and the descendants of Abraham the blood sacrifice as a means to atone (*provide reconciliation*) for their sin. For each sin a person had to bring a sheep or a goat and lay his hands on the head of the animal and confess (*lay upon the innocent animal*) his sin. The priest then killed the animal and sprinkled its blood upon the sides of the altar. The fat from its insides was to be burned on the altar. In this way atonement or reconciliation was made for each sin or offence a person committed intentionally or unintentionally.

Once each year on the Day of Atonement the high priest was first to offer a sacrifice for his own sin. Then two goats would be brought to him. One would be chosen by lot to be the scapegoat. The priest was to lay his hands upon the scapegoat and confess the sins of all the people. Then it was led to a place outside the camp and turned loose. This was a picture of the people's sins being carried far away and remembered no more. (*See Psalm 103:12 later on*) The other animal was sacrificed and with its blood the high priest was to enter into the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and sprinkle its

blood upon the atonement cover (ark of the covenant) and before it seven times to atone for the sins of all the people. This had to be repeated each year on a special day.

Further, any person with a bloody discharge, whether man or woman, was deemed unclean and could not worship in a holy place until pronounced clean by the priest.

All of the utensils used in the sacrifice of animals and for the meat that was prepared for the priests to eat had to be cleansed by blood. Even the priests had to be cleansed and made holy by the blood of animals. God had said, “The life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves upon the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” The animal sacrifices had to be repeated again and again because the sacrifices were an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (*Heb 10:3-4*) What was needed was a better sacrifice who was like sinners, but innocent of any sin (*without blemish*), who would give his blood or his life for the sins of the people.

In this way God gave a picture of what was to happen one day when a perfect sinless sacrifice, a blood sacrifice, would be made for the sins of all people for all time. This sacrifice would never need to be repeated. It would be lasting and effective.

David wrote a psalm or song that has these words: “Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name...He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the grave and crowns me with love and compassion....The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love...He does not always treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” (*Psa 103:1, 3, 8, 10-12*) But to claim this forgiveness there is something we must do. Soon we will see what it is.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Who died to cover Adam and Eve’s sin and nakedness? (*Innocent animals.*)
2. What did God say about Abel’s blood spilled on the ground? (*It was crying out to him.*)
3. What was the sign that protected Abraham’s descendants when God sent the death angel in Egypt? (*Blood of a sheep or goat on the doorposts and over the doorway.*)
4. What did the blood sacrifice do for the people in Moses’ day? (*It provided atonement for their sin—the life of the innocent was exchanged for the life of the sinner to satisfy God’s wrath.*)
5. Did the sacrifice need to be repeated again and again? (*Yes. Each time a person sinned a confession of sin and a sacrifice was required.*)
6. What was the purpose of the scapegoat? (*To carry the sins of the people away.*)
7. What did David say about how far away our transgressions (sins) would be removed? (*As far as the east is from the west.*)
8. What do you do when you sin against God? How do you make it right—atone for it or seek reconciliation with God?
9. The sacrifice had to be without blemish—no defect, illness or other blemish. Can you think what that might be a picture of? (*The sacrifice has to be perfect—without sin or innocent of any wrongdoing. The innocent to die in the place of the guilty.*)
10. Where can we find a person who is completely innocent—that is, without sin to take our place? The Bible says that All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are all guilty. The people in that day were guilty of sin. The prophets were guilty of sin. We are guilty of sin. Where can we turn for a substitute to receive our punishment?
11. Do you want to have a right relationship with God? The Bible says: “But your iniquities have separate you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you.” (*Isa 59:2*) Again the prophet Isaiah says: “For you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins.” (*Isa 64:7b*) We need a substitute sacrifice to cover our sins. God has provided it for

us.

A Verse to Remember: “But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” Heb 10:3-4

GRUMBLING AGAINST GOD BRINGS SUFFERING

Scriptures to Study: Num 21:4-9; Psa 78:15-20, 23-31; 106:6-7, 13-15, 24-25

Talk About These Things:

1. Are you happy and satisfied with your life? If you could change anything, what would it be?
2. What makes you unhappy? Does everybody agree on the same things?
3. How do you change your circumstances when unhappy? Who do you ask for help?
4. Have you ever grumbled (complained) against God for what He has given you? Or not given you?
5. Do you trust God to meet all your needs from his abundance?

Read From Bible: Num 21:4-6

Tell the Story:**Grumbling Against God Brings Suffering**

After God punished Pharaoh king of Egypt and the Egyptian people for making slaves of Abraham's descendants, He planned to have Moses lead the people back to the land of Abraham. But the people had rebelled in fear after their spies returned with a report about the strong cities in that land and the tall people. "If only we had died in the desert! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. We should choose a new leader and go back to Egypt." God was angry with the people and punished those leading the rebellion after Moses interceded for the people and asked God not to destroy them all.

Because of their rebellion, and even though the people later repented, God granted their wish to die in the desert as they wandered for the next forty years. Only the young people would live to enter the land God had promised to the descendants of Abraham while they were still slaves in Egypt. God still loved Abraham's descendants and provided their food and water. Even their clothes and shoes did not wear out. In the morning God provided a kind of food which the people gathered from the ground and made cakes like bread. And in the evening He sent quails among their camp so they had meat. When there was no water He provided that, too. One time God told Moses to strike a rock and bountiful water flowed out for all the people to drink.

But the people grew impatient and tired of the food that God was providing, so they began to speak against God and against Moses saying, "Why have you brought us out of the land of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food." At another time the people had complained saying, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and had all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve the entire assembly to death." (*Exo 16:3*) Again the people complained, "We remember the fish we had in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite. We never see anything to eat but this manna." It was at this time that God supplied the people with quails. When the people caught the quails in their greed they craved the meat and while it was still between their teeth, the Lord burned with anger and struck many with a severe plague. (*Numbers 11:5-6, 32-33*)

So it happened again as the people grew impatient and complained. At this time the Lord sent

poisonous snakes among them; they bit the people who were grumbling and many died. The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Now pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.

The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole so all can see it; then anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.”

So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole as God commanded. Then when anyone grumbled against the Lord and was bitten by a snake, if he looked at the bronze snake on the pole, he would live. So God did not take away the snakes but provided a way to escape his judgment whenever one sinned by complaining against him. The people had repented of their sin and confessed their sin to Moses and God. God heard their cry and the prayer of Moses and provided a salvation. But to have that salvation the people had to obey what God said they must do. Salvation is like that.

Later the bronze snake on the pole was used as a picture of God’s salvation to escape the judgment for sin. Whenever a person sinned, and were bitten by the snake—that is, the penalty of sin is death, if the person would look to the salvation God provided lifted up before all the people, then they would live. If not, then they would die. Soon we’ll see who was lifted up like the snake so that men might look and live.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What had happened to Abraham’s descendants when they took their eyes off the mighty power of God? *(They became afraid, lost their confidence in God, and so rebelled against what God had promised to do for them.)*
2. Was God just in punishing them? *(Yes. God is righteous and all his work is righteous, just and good.)*
3. How had God demonstrated his love and compassion for the people? *(He had provided their food and water every day.)*
4. Did the people appreciate what God was doing for them? *(No. They soon grew impatient and began to complain.)*
5. Had food been plentiful and varied in Egypt? *(Yes. But there the people were also slaves.)*
6. So when the people began to complain yet again by grumbling against God and Moses, how did God punish their sin? *(By sending poisonous snakes among the people to bite those who were sinning.)*
7. When the people began to sicken and die what did they do? *(They confessed their sin against Moses and God and cried out to Moses to pray for them—to ask God to take the poisonous snakes away.)*
8. Did God hear the prayer of Moses? *(Yes. He told Moses what to do so the people would be healed and live.)*
9. Was the snake an idol for the people to worship? *(No. It was to test their obedience to do what God said they must do to live. It was a picture of something going to happen in the future.)*
10. Did God take away the poisonous snakes? *(No. They were God’s judgment against those who sinned by grumbling against God.)*
11. If you had been there and happened to be guilty of grumbling against God and were bitten by a poisonous snake, would you have obeyed what God said you must do to live?
12. Did you know that you have been bitten by a snake? You see, whenever we sin—and the prophet Ezekiel said “the soul that sins will die”, and another has said that everyone has sinned, we have been bitten by the sin snake that leads to death. Unless we do what God says we must do, we cannot live. Death is already at work in our bodies. Adam died. Moses died. Our ancestors died. We, too, will die.
13. But you may be saying: “Sure, we all die and no one has remained alive without dying. We all face physical death—death of our bodies. But there is another death that is a terrible death. It is the death of our souls. You see, death is a picture of separation. The body dies and is separated

from the soul. When the soul dies it is separated from God's presence forever—suffering an eternal punishment for sin. We'll talk more about this soon when we see how God has atoned for our sins—but we must look to, or accept, what God has done for us in order to live.

A Verse to Remember: “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.” Psa 107:8-9

Scriptures to Study: Joshua 23:1-3, 6-8; 24:2, 14-15, 19-21, 23-24; Judges 2:7-19

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you take time to remember the good things God has done for you and your family? Can you name some ways in which God has blessed you and your family?
2. What do you think God requires of you in return for his blessing?
3. Is God faithful to keep his promises to us?
4. Can you think of some things which might turn our hearts away from faithfully serving God?
5. If God were to warn you about sin, would you listen to his warning?
6. What do you think might happen if we do not listen to God's warning about sin? (or any unfaithfulness?)

Read From Bible: Judges 2:10-15

Tell the Story:

The Judges—When The People Forgot God And Suffered

God had promised to Abraham that He would deliver his people from slavery in Egypt and bring them back to the land God was giving to Abraham and his descendants. God had appeared to Moses and said he was the one to ask the king of Egypt to let the people go. And God said, "I will be with you." After God fulfilled his promise to deliver the people from slavery, Moses led the people as they journeyed back to the land of promise. After Moses died, a new leader Joshua, who was faithful and courageous, was chosen to lead the people. Again God fulfilled his promise to help Abraham's people drive out the wicked Canaanites and possess the land. (*Remember the story of Sodom and Gomorrah*)

Many years had passed and now Joshua was old. So he called the people to assemble and said, "Every promise God has given you has been fulfilled. You have seen everything the Lord your God has done to these nations for your sake. Now be very careful to obey all that is written in the book of the Law of Moses (Taurat), without turning aside to the right or to the left. Do not call on the names of the gods of the people who live here, do not swear by them, and you must not serve them or bow down to them. You are to hold fast to the Lord your God."

Then Joshua reminded the people, "Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham, worshiped other gods. I took Abraham from that place and brought him to this land and gave him many descendants. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped. Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Then the people answered, "We will not forsake the Lord to serve other gods! It was the Lord our God who brought us out of Egypt and delivered us from our slavery. We, too, will serve the Lord because He is our God."

Then Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the Lord, He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, He will turn and bring disaster on you, after He has been good to you."

The people cried out to Joshua, “We will serve the Lord our God and obey him.”

After Joshua died and all the leaders of that day had passed away, another generation grew up who neither knew the Lord nor what He had done for Abraham’s descendants. They did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the false Baal gods. They turned from faithfully following the Lord who was the God of their fathers. The people began to worship and follow the false gods of the people. This provoked the Lord to anger. In his anger the Lord handed the people over to enemy raiders who plundered them, taking away their animals and food. God gave them into the hands of their enemies who lived all around them, and they could no longer resist the enemies. When the descendants of Abraham went out to fight against their enemies God was against them and helped the enemy to defeat them. The people were in great distress.

When the people groaned under their oppression and affliction and cried out to God, He had compassion on them and raised up a deliverer, a judge that God would help to defeat the enemies and drive them from the land.

There would be peace and blessing during the days of the judge. But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than their fathers. They followed other false gods, serving them and worshipping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways. In those days there was no king and the people did whatever they wanted to do.

Many times the people fell into sin against God and each time God gave them into the hand of their enemies to oppress them and cause them to suffer. Whenever the people would cry out to God, He would have compassion on them and raise up a judge to deliver them. The disobedience of the people led to their oppression and suffering. But each time God was faithful to deliver them when the people turned to God for help and repented of their sin.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Did God love the descendants of Abraham? (*Yes. He showed his love by providing for them and promising to deliver them from slavery.*)
2. Who did God choose to deliver the people from slavery in Egypt? (*Moses*)
3. Did God deliver the people from Egypt as He promised? (*Yes.*)
4. After Moses died who was the new leader of the people? (*Joshua*)
5. What did Joshua say about God’s promises? (*God had kept all his promises.*)
6. What are some things Joshua warned the people about? (*Do not turn aside from following God’s Law. Do not worship or serve the gods of the other nations. Throw away any false gods the people had brought with them from Egypt.*)
7. Who did Joshua say that he and his household would worship? (*The Lord.*)
8. What did the people say they would do? (*Serve the Lord and worship him only.*)
9. Did Joshua say this was an easy thing to do? (*No. For God is a holy and jealous God who would punish the people if they failed to serve him only.*)
10. After Joshua and the leaders in his day died what happened? (*The new generation did not know God or remember what He had done for their fathers.*)
11. What else did the people do when they forgot God? (*They followed and worshiped the gods of the peoples around them.*) Did God warn the people not to do this? (*Yes.*)
12. When the people forgot God and fell into sin by worshipping other gods what happened? (*God no longer protected them from their enemies who plundered them, taking away their food and animals.*)
13. Did the people suffer when they fell into sin against God? (*Yes.*)
14. Did God still love the people? (*Yes.*) How did He show his love? (*When the people cried out to him in their suffering and oppression, God raised up a judge to deliver his people.*)
15. What happened when the judge died? (*The people forgot God and began to worship false gods again.*) Were they stubborn in their evil practices? (*Yes.*)
16. What happens when we disobey God? (*We suffer.*) Does God still love us? (*Yes.*) If we repent and turn from our sin, will God help us? (*Yes.*)

17. What do you think it means when it says that God is a jealous God?
18. Do you worship (turn to) any other gods or spirits for help when you suffer? Does this please God? What do you think He wants you to do?

A Verse to Remember: “For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.” Psa 72:12

DAVID—HIS FAMILY SUFFERED BECAUSE OF HIS SIN

Scriptures to Study: Exodus 20:1-17; 22:1; Leviticus 20:10; 2Samuel 23:13-16, 34, 39; 11:1-12:14; Psalm 38; 51

Talk About These Things:

1. Has a good friend ever sinned against (greatly offended) you in some way?
2. Did they ask your forgiveness and offer to make it right with you?
3. Have you ever sinned against (greatly offended) a good friend?
4. Did you ask their forgiveness and offer to make it right?
5. Do you think that our sin has consequences for us?
6. Do you think that our sin has consequences for others?
7. Does God see and know all our sin?

Read From Bible: 2Sa 11:2-5, 14-15, 26-27

Tell the Story:**David—His Family Suffered Because Of His Sin**

While David was a young king and before he had conquered all his enemies, there was a time when an enemy army occupied the land. David and his mighty men, or body guards, were hiding in a safe place during harvest time. David longed for some water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem." Some of David's men heard his words and broke through the enemy and drew some water from the well that is near the gate of Bethlehem. When they brought the water to David he would not drink it. Instead, he poured it out as an offering before the Lord saying, "Is this water not the blood of my men who went at the risk of their lives to get it?" Among David's mighty men were Eliam, who was the father of Bathsheba, and Uriah, the Hittite, who was the husband of Bathsheba.

Some years later at a time when David's soldiers were away fighting an enemy nation, David could not sleep so he went to walk on the roof of his palace. On a nearby house he saw a beautiful woman bathing, purifying herself after her time of uncleanness. David sent someone to find out who she was. The servant reported: "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, and wife of Uriah the Hittite. Then David sent for her and had Bathsheba brought to the palace where he slept with her. Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, "I am with child."

When David heard this he sent for Bathsheba's husband Uriah and had him brought from the battlefield to Jerusalem. David said, "Go to your house, see your wife and spend some time with her." David also sent along a gift. But Uriah did not go to his house. Instead he slept at the entrance to the palace. When David learned this, he asked, "Haven't you come from a long distance? Why didn't you go home?" Then David said, "Stay here one more day and then you may return to the fighting." David invited Uriah to eat with him at the palace and David made him drunk. But when night came Uriah did not go to his own house and wife, but again slept at the palace with the king's servants. In the morning David wrote a letter to the commander of the army to put Uriah in front of the battle so he would surely be killed. So Uriah died and David was told what happened. He said to the messenger, "Tell the commander, don't let this upset you, the sword devours first one then another."

After Bathsheba had mourned for her dead husband, David sent for her and had her brought to his house to be his wife. But the thing David had done greatly displeased the Lord. So the Lord sent

Nathan the prophet to David. He told David this story: “There were two men in a certain town., one was very wealthy and one very poor. The rich man had many flocks and herds of animals. The poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it and it grew up with his children, sharing his food, drinking from his cup and even sleeping in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. By and by a traveler came to visit the rich man who sent and took the ewe lamb from the poor man and prepared a meal for his guest.”

When David heard this story he burned with anger and cried out, “The man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for the lamb four times over.” Then Nathan said to him, “You are the man! Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite and took his wife to be your own. This is what the Lord says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you’.”

Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” The Lord replied, “I have taken away your sin, you are not going to die.” Later David cried out to the Lord, “O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger, or discipline me in your wrath...My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear...I confess my iniquity, I am troubled by my sin.” And again he prayed, “Have mercy on me, O God according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin...Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence...Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”

The child born to David and Bathsheba became sick and died after one week. Later one of David’s sons killed his brother for spoiling his sister. Then the army killed that son for rebelling against David. And after David’s death still another son was put to death for desiring to have one of David’s wives.

God forgave David’s sin. But there were terrible consequences for David’s family and generations of David’s descendants to come. God redeemed David’s life and gave him two special sons by Bathsheba. One was Solomon the wisest man who ever lived. And the other was the ancestor of God’s Anointed One to fulfill a promise God made to David. “I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth...I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever...I will be his father and he will be my son...and my love will never be taken away from him.” (2Sa 7:9, 12, 13, 14, 15)

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Do you think David knew who Uriah the Hittite was?
2. (**Read the Ten Commandments in Exo 20**) Can anyone point out which commandments David was guilty of breaking? (*Coveting his neighbor’s wife, adultery, murder*)
3. Do you think David was trying to hide his sin with Bathsheba? How?
4. Who was more righteous, David or Uriah the Hittite? Explain why.
5. Did David’s plan to have Uriah killed work? (*Yes.*) Was David upset to hear the news of Uriah’s death? (*No.*)
6. Did David’s plan to cover his sin work? (*No. God knew what David had done.*)
7. How did God confront David about his sin? (*He sent the prophet Nathan.*)
8. How did Nathan bring David’s sin before him? (*He told a story about two men and what one did to the other man’s little ewe lamb.*)
9. Was David angry to hear the story? (*Yes. He said the guilty man deserves to die!*)
10. What did Nathan say to David? (*You are the man.*)
11. Was David sorry for his sin? (*Yes. He confessed his sin before God.*)
12. Did God forgive David’s sin? (*Yes.*)
13. But what consequences would there be because of David’s sin? (*There would be calamity—disaster upon David’s house.*)
14. Was David’s accusation of the guilty man fulfilled—that he must pay four times over for what he did? (*Yes. Four of David’s sons died or were killed as a result.*)

15. Did God still love David? (*Yes.*)
16. Did God still have a plan for David's descendants? (*Yes.*)
17. Have you ever sinned against your neighbor or friend—even in some small way?
18. Did you ask for forgiveness?
19. Does God still love you?

A Verse to Remember: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1Jn 1:9

Scriptures to Study: 1Kings 16:30-31; 17:1; 18:1-2, 16-45

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you believe that if we do what is wrong it will lead to suffering and punishment?
2. If our leaders disobey God does it cause us to suffer, too?
3. Do you think that God is pleased with false prophets?
4. Whose prayer do you think God will answer—a true prophet appointed by God or a false prophet?
5. In our story today the people suffer partly because of the sins of their king and partly because of their own sin. Elijah's name means "my God is Jehovah".

Read From Bible: 1Kings 18:36-39

Tell the Story:

Prophet Elijah—The Right Choice Ends Suffering

In those days the people often suffered because their king sinned against God. God had warned the people that their king should be careful in marriage so his heart would not be led astray. (*Deu 17:17*) King Ahab had married a foreign princess from a neighboring country. Her name was Jezebel and she brought with her worship of the Baal god and many prophets of that false god which she fed at her table. This provoked the Lord to anger. So the Lord sent Elijah the prophet to say, "As the Lord lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

So a drought came on the land for three and half years and the people suffered from lack of rain. Now the Baal god was thought to be the god that brought thunder and rain. But there was no rain.

After a long time the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Go and present yourself to King Ahab, and I will send rain upon the land." So Elijah went to present himself to the king. The king was out searching for grass for his horses as there was a severe drought in the land from the lack of rain.

When the king saw Elijah he said, "Is that you, the one who has brought this trouble on the people?" "I have not made trouble for the people. But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the Lord's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon all the people from the land and have them meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the false prophets who eat at Jezebel's table," Elijah commanded.

So King Ahab sent word throughout the country and assembled the people and the false prophets on the mountain. Then Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him. But if Baal is God, follow him." The people said nothing. Then Elijah said to them, "I am the Lord's prophet. Get two animals for sacrifice. Let the false prophets choose one for themselves, cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but set no fire to it. Then call on the name of your god and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God." Then all the people said, "What you say is good."

The false prophets of Baal chose an animal and prepared their sacrifice but set no fire to it. Then they began to call upon the name of their god Baal from morning till noon. "O Baal, answer us!" they shouted. But there was no reply. They shouted louder and louder and danced around their altar but there was no fire. At midday Elijah began to mock them saying, "Shout louder! Surely Baal is a god!

Perhaps he is in deep thought, or traveling, or asleep and you need to wake him. So they shouted louder and louder, dancing and cutting themselves with swords until their blood flowed. But there was no answer from their god and no fire.

Then Elijah said to the people, “Come here to me.” When the people had gathered, Elijah repaired the altar of the Lord. He took twelve large stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob. When the altar was built Elijah prepared the wood and the animal upon the altar. Then he dug a trench about the altar and ordered that four large jars of water be brought and poured out on the altar. Then he said, “Do it again!” And he ordered that water be brought a third time. The animal and wood were wet. The stones of the altar were wet. And water filled the trench about the altar.

At the time for the evening sacrifice the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, let it be known today that you are the only God and I am your servant. I have done all these things at your command. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you alone are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

Then the fire of the Lord fell from heaven and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones of the altar and even licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they fell on their faces and cried out: “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”

Then Elijah commanded them to seize the false prophets of Baal and bring them down to the valley and put them to death. Elijah said to the king, “Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of heavy rain.” Elijah sent his servant to go look toward the sea. When the servant returned he said that he saw nothing. Seven times Elijah told the servant to go and look. The seventh time the servant came to say, “A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea.” Elijah said to the king, “Hitch up your chariot and go before the rain stops you.” Meanwhile the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, and a heavy rain began to fall upon the land. The drought was broken, the suffering and famine ended. The sin of the king and people had brought drought and suffering. When the people repented of their sin, God was merciful and sent rain.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What had King Ahab done that displeased God? (*He married a foreign princess who brought her false god and prophets with her to lead the people into sin.*)
2. What was God’s punishment on the land and its people? (*No rain except at Elijah’s word.*)
3. Who was really to blame for bringing drought and famine on the land—Elijah or the king?
4. What did Elijah command the king, false prophets and people to do? (*Gather on the mountain.*)
5. What question did Elijah ask the people when they had assembled? (*Why do you waver between two opinions? If Baal is god, then choose him. If Jehovah is God, then choose him.*)
6. How did Elijah plan to prove who was the true God? (*By two sacrifices, both with no fire set to them, and the true God would send fire.*)
7. Did the god of the false prophets answer their cries and prayers for fire? (*No.*)
8. Why do you think Elijah chose twelve stones, one for each tribe of the people, to build his altar? (*To show that the true God was really the God of all Abraham’s descendants.*)
9. What unusual thing did Elijah request to be done to the sacrifice? (*He asked that four large jars of water should be poured on it three times.*)
10. Do you remember what Elijah prayed? (*God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, I have done this at your command. Let it be known that you are the only true God and I am your servant. Answer me so the people will know that God is turning their hearts back to him.*)
11. Did God answer Elijah’s prayer? (*Yes. Immediately fire fell from heaven and burned up the sacrifice, wood, altar, and water.*)
12. What did the people say when they saw the fire burning the sacrifice? (*The Lord—he is God!*)
13. How were the false prophets of Baal punished? (*They were put to death.*)
14. What did Elijah tell King Ahab? (*I hear the sound of heavy rain.*)
15. What did the servant report to Elijah? (*At first he reported seeing nothing. The seventh time he*

saw a small cloud arising from the sea.)

16. Did God love the people? (*Yes.*) How did God show his mercy? (*He sent rain when the people turned to him and rejected the false god.*)
17. From this story can we say that if our leaders sin and cause the people to sin that God will withhold his blessing so that everyone suffers? If the people repent God will have mercy.

A Verse to Remember: "...Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him." Deuteronomy 30:19b-20a

Scriptures to Study: Jonah 1-4

Talk About These Things:

1. It is God who gives us work to do. What happens if we refuse to do the work God gives us?
2. Can we run away or hide from God?
3. Have you ever disliked (hated) someone so much that you refused to help them?
4. If a wicked people repent (turn from their sin) will God have mercy on them?

Read From Bible: Jonah 1:1-3, 12, 17; 2:1, 10; 3:1-2, 5, 10

Tell the Story:

Jonah—The Prophet Who Suffered When He Disobeyed God

Long ago after the great flood in the days of Noah the city of Nineveh was founded. The people were proud but very cruel and wicked. They severely treated the peoples they conquered so they were greatly disliked by the descendants of Abraham. Their kings and armies went out to conquer the peoples and take whatever was valuable. Then they would resettle the captives in another land and bring in new people to live in the conquered land. (*2Kings 17:24*)

One day the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jonah saying: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed instead for the seaport where he found a ship going to another place. Jonah paid the fare and sailed away to flee from the Lord.

But the Lord sent a great storm on the sea so that the ship threatened to break up. Each sailor cried out to his own god for help. And they threw all the cargo into the sea. But Jonah had gone down into the ship and was fast asleep. The captain woke Jonah saying, “Get up! Call on your god! Perhaps he will take notice of us, and we will not perish. Then the sailors cast lots to see who was responsible for the storm and the lot fell to Jonah. He said, “I am a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land. I am running away from my God.”

The storm was getting worse and worse. The sailors asked Jonah, “What should we do to make the sea calm for us?” “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” Jonah replied, “and it will become calm.” But the sailors did not want to throw Jonah into the sea. Then the sailors cried to the Lord, “Do not hold us accountable for taking this man’s life.” They took Jonah and threw him into the sea and the storm stopped and the sea was calm again.

The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and nights. From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord saying: “In my distress I called to the Lord and he answered me...I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple...But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God...Salvation comes from the Lord.” The Lord commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” This time Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh which was a very large city and requiring three days to go all through it. Jonah proclaimed: “Forty

more days and Nineveh will be destroyed.” The people of Nineveh heard Jonah’s words and believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the poorest, put on sackcloth as a sign of their repentance.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. He decreed that all the inhabitants of Nineveh must fast, not eating or drinking anything, and be covered in sackcloth, even the animals. He said, “Let everyone urgently call on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Perhaps God will have mercy on us and turn his fierce anger away and not destroy us.”

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. But Jonah was angry that God had spared the people of Nineveh. He said to God, “This is what I said while still at home. This is why I ran away because I knew you were gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from calamity. Now, Lord, take away my life for it is better for me to die than to live.”

But the Lord replied, “Have you any right to be angry? Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What were the people of Nineveh like? (*Very wicked people.*)
 2. What did Jonah do when God asked him to go to Nineveh to preach against it? (*He ran away.*)
 3. Did God know what Jonah had done? (*Yes.*) What did God cause to happen? (*A great storm.*)
 4. Did the sailors suffer because of Jonah? (*Yes. They lost all their cargo and were very fearful of dying.*)
 5. Did Jonah confess his sin? (*Yes. He said he was running away from his God.*)
 6. What had God prepared for Jonah? (*A great fish to swallow him.*)
 7. What did Jonah do inside the fish? (*He prayed to God and confessed his sin and said only God could save him.*)
 8. How did Jonah escape from the fish? (*God commanded the fish to spit Jonah out.*)
 9. Did Jonah obey God the second time? (*Yes. He went to Nineveh and traveled throughout the city and gave them God’s warning of coming destruction.*)
 10. When the people heard Jonah’s warning what did they do? (*Repented of their sins (wickedness and violence) and put on sackcloth as a sign of their repentance.*)
 11. What did the king do when he heard Jonah’s warning? (*Took off his royal robes and put on sackcloth and sat in the dust. He also commanded that all people and animals should fast. The people should call on God to save them.*)
 12. Did God see what the people were doing and hear their prayer? (*Yes.*)
 13. Did God destroy the people as he had threatened to do? (*No. Instead, he had compassion on them and showed mercy.*)
 14. Was Jonah pleased that God spared the people of Nineveh? (*No. He was angry.*)
 15. Do you think that God loved Jonah? Who gave Jonah his work to do?
 16. Do you think that God loved the people of Nineveh?
 17. Do you think that God loves you? If God sent word for you to repent and turn from your sin, would you do it? How would you show your repentance to God and others?
- Does our disobedience cause others to suffer? Have you been disobedient and caused someone to suffer? Has someone been disobedient and caused you to suffer? If they repent would you forgive them?

A Verse to Remember: “Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for

he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” Joel 2:13

or

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” 2Corinthians 7:10

The Suffering Servant

Lesson 22

PROPHET JEREMIAH AND THE PEOPLE WHO REFUSED TO REPENT

Scriptures to Study: Jeremiah 1:4-10; 6:10-19; 7:23, 25-26; 9:13-16; 12:13; 14:11-12; 18:11-12; 44:4-5, 8, 15-19. 24-25, 27-28

Talk About These Things:

Note: *While this story is actually about the Israelites, it is a universal story in that stiff-necked rebellion brings suffering on a people. Even though the people dismiss the words of the true prophet, God has asked the question about whose words will stand—the people’s or God’s. It is probably best not to mention either Israel or Judah at this time, but simply to refer to the people.*

1. Why does God send prophets to warn us?
2. What if we do not listen to their words? What do you think might happen?
3. Do we really fear God and believe that He is powerful to do what He says He will do?
4. Could the prophets be saying something to us today? What is their message? Do you think we really listen to the words of God which the prophets are sent to speak?

Read From Bible: Jeremiah 44:4-5, 15-17

Tell the Story:

Prophet Jeremiah And the People Who Refused To Repent

The word of God came to Jeremiah saying: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.” Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched Jeremiah’s mouth and said, “Now I have put my words in your mouth...I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods, and in worshiping what their hands have made. Stand up and say to them whatever I command you.”

When Jeremiah said to the people: “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them, they find no pleasure in it...Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you...I sent you my servants the prophets. But you did not listen to me or pay attention. You were stiff-necked and did more evil than your fathers...They have followed the stubbornness of their hearts and followed other gods’.” Then God said to Jeremiah: “I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water and I will scatter them among the nations...They will sow wheat but reap thorns; they will wear themselves out but gain nothing.”

Again the Lord said to Jeremiah: “Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague...Now say to the people, ‘This is what the Lord says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions’.” But the people will reply: “It’s no use. We will continue with our own plans; each of us will follow the stubbornness of his evil heart.”

After God had sent disaster on those people and destroyed their city, those who escaped continued

to rebel against God. They had fled to nearby Egypt and continued their evil practices. So the Lord said to Jeremiah: “Again and again I sent my servants the prophets who said, ‘Do not do these detestable things I the Lord hate.’ But the people did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their wickedness or stop burning incense to other gods.” Then God said: “Why do you provoke me to anger with idols their hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt?”

Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women present, a very large number, and all the people living in Egypt, said to Jeremiah: “We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord! We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and pour out drink offerings to her just as we and our fathers, our kings and our officials did before our city was destroyed. But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing, and been perishing by sword or famine.” The women added, “When we burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did not our husbands know that we were making cakes like her image and pouring out drink offerings to her?”

Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including the women, “Hear the word of the Lord all you people...Go ahead, do that which you promised. Keep your vows. But hear the word of the Lord: “I am watching over the people for harm and not good. They will perish by sword and famine until they are all destroyed. Those who return from Egypt will be very few. Then they will know whose word will stand—mine or theirs.”

And so the people brought suffering and disaster upon their own heads because they were stubborn and would not repent after hearing the words of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah the prophet.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. When God chooses his prophets what do you think He might look for? (*One who will faithfully speak the truth that God gives him to speak.*)
2. Does God see and know all that people are doing? If they do what is right is God pleased? (*Yes.*) If they do not do what is right, do you think God is pleased? (*No.*)
3. If we are not doing what is right, what do you think God might send his prophet to say? (*Repent—turn from your evil way, and live.*)
4. What do you think might happen if the people do not listen to the words the prophets speaks? (*God will punish their stubbornness.*)
5. Do you think God desires to harm people or bless them? (*God wants to bless people.*)
6. Why do you think God wants to bless people? (*Because He loves people and wants to show his love by blessing their lives.*)
7. If we suffer for doing what is wrong, who is to blame for our suffering? Is God to blame because He punishes us and causes us to suffer? Or are we to blame because we do not listen to God’s words and turn from our sin?
8. Are you suffering now? What do you think has caused your suffering? Remember in the story of Job that sometimes righteous people suffer, too, because Satan afflicts them.
9. If you are suffering, who do you turn to for help and comfort in your suffering? Have you ever turned to someone or something besides God?
10. When God blesses you, do you thank him for his blessing? If God has to punish you to turn you from sin, would you still bless him and thank him for his love?

Soon we will see the story of someone who had done no wrong himself and who suffered terribly at the hands of evil men. Yet he did not open his mouth against those who brought on his suffering. And while it is difficult for us to understand, it was God who caused him to suffer for our good. The story happened a long time ago, but it still applies to us today. God’s Word says: Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of

eternal salvation for all who obey him.” (*Heb 5:8-9*) Another prophet said: “Trials come to us so that our faith, worth more than gold, might be refined. (*1Pe 1:7*) God can use suffering to refine us and teach us obedience as well as to punish us when we sin.

A Verse to Remember: “Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins? Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.” Lam 3:39-40

The Suffering Servant

Lesson 23

THE PROPHETS TELL ABOUT THE COMING ANOINTED ONE WHO IS TO SUFFER

Scriptures to Study: Psalm 22:6-8, 14-18; 27:12-13; 41:9; 69:4, 19-21; 109:4; Isaiah 6:1-9; 7:14; 9:6-7; 50:6; 52:14; Zechariah 11:12-13; 12:10; 13:7; Micah 5:2

Talk About These Things:

Note: *This lesson and the following one continue to look at prophecies about the coming Anointed One who is to suffer. The two lessons may be combined into one to shorten the time frame by taking appropriate verses from this lesson and including them in the following lesson. This lesson looks at various scattered prophecies while the next one focuses mainly on the Isaiah 53 prophecies regarding the Suffering Servant as described by the prophet.*

1. Suffering comes in many forms. Can you think of some ways in which one might suffer?
2. Do any of these ways have to do with our friends or those who know us, or who might be jealous of us?
3. We normally think of suffering pain or suffering from a lack of necessities like clean water or food. What about suffering from shame? Or from betrayal by a friend? What about ridicule and mocking? How about false accusations?
4. Pay close attention to the prophecies in this story as you will later see them all fulfilled by what happens to a certain person.

Read From Bible: Psalm 41:9; 22:6-8; 109:4

Tell the Story:

The Prophets Tell About The Coming Anointed One Who Is To Suffer

The glory of God appeared to the prophet Isaiah while he was worshiping in the temple. Suddenly there were the heavenly beings who attend the presence of God. They were crying out “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty.” Isaiah cried out in terror, “Woe is me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among people of unclean lips, and now my eyes have seen the Lord Almighty.” Then one of the beings took a live coal in his hand from the altar and touched it to the lips of Isaiah and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin is covered.” Then the Lord gave Isaiah the message he was to give the people.

Part of the message was judgment upon the people because of their sin. But then God began to speak about things that were to happen in the future. The prophet had said, “The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, that is, God with us.”

Again the prophet spoke these words from God, “For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, the government will be on his shoulders. He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace. He will reign like a king on David’s throne and over his kingdom, upholding it with justice and righteousness.” (*The references to Everlasting God and Mighty Father are omitted deliberately at this time.*)

Another prophet named Micah said: “But you Bethlehem, though you are small, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Abraham’s descendants, whose origins are from of old, from

ancient times.” Now Bethlehem was the home of David and his father’s family.

But there were other prophecies which were very troubling. Even David spoke some of them. One said: “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint...My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth, you lay me in the dust of the earth. A band of evil men like dogs have surrounded me, they have pierced my hands and my feet...People stare and gloat over me...They divide my garments among them casting lots for my clothing.” (*Psa 22:14-18*) Those who hate me without reason outnumber the hairs of my head, many are enemies without cause, seeking to destroy me.” (*Psalm 69:4*)

Again the prophet said: “I am scorned, disgraced and shamed by my enemies. I looked for sympathy but there was none, and for someone to comfort me, but found none. They put bitter gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.” (*Psalm 69:19-21*)

“I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard, I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.” (*Isaiah 50:6*) “All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads and saying: ‘He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him’.” (*Psalm 22:7*)

“They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child.” (*Zechariah 12:10*)

The prophet David spoke about betrayal by a close friend saying, “Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (*Psalm 41:9*) And the prophet Zechariah spoke about the one who would sell his betrayal for a price: “I told them, ‘If you think it best, give me my pay,’ so they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.” (*Zechariah 11:12-13*)

Again the prophet cried out: “Do not turn me over to the desire of my enemies, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence.” (*Psalm 27:12*) “In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer.” (*Psalm 109:4*)

But the suffering would be terrible, for the prophet said: “...there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.” (*Isa 52:14*) And all this was going to happen to just one man. God knew it and told his prophets to speak about it in the Taurat. Will all this happen? God said: “Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you...” (*Isaiah 48:5*)

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Can anyone guess how long some of these prophecies were given before they were fulfilled? David lived about a thousand years before the prophecies he spoke were fulfilled. How did he know these things? (*God told him.*)
2. Can you list some of the terrible things which would happen to cause this special person to suffer? (*He would be betrayed by a friend. He would be falsely accused. He would be mocked, spit upon, insulted, beaten and his beard pulled out. His clothes would be taken from him. There would be shame, thirst, piercing of his hands and feet, bitter gall in his food and vinegar for his thirst.*)
3. Which one of these would you like to happen to you? Each one is bad, but all of them would happen to this one person.
4. Can you imagine why the people were so angry and acted so shamefully toward this one person? You may be surprised to find out. You may even find that you have strong feelings about this person, too.
5. Was there some purpose in all this suffering? What purpose could God have in permitting such terrible things to happen to this person?
6. Can you imagine how this suffering has helped you? You see it was all planned from a long time before. Satan wanted it to happen. God knew it would happen. Remember in the story of Job

that he was a righteous person, who tried to live a life pleasing to God. This man who these prophecies are about was a righteous person, who always obeyed God and did what was right.

7. In our next story we'll learn some more prophecies about this person and just why he was to suffer so. Later we will see how the prophecies were all fulfilled just as God said would happen.

A Verse to Remember: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.” (Isa 42:1)

ISAIAH PROPHESED ABOUT THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Scriptures to Study: Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Isaiah 11:1-2; 42:1; 53:1-12

Talk About These Things:

1. We have been talking about suffering and have seen how sin has brought suffering to many. We saw in the story of Job that even the righteous suffer sometime. Today we continue by looking at more words spoken by Isaiah the prophet. Remember, it was Isaiah who saw a vision of God in the temple and his lips were purified by one of God's angels.
2. Now we are going to see what purpose God had for the terrible suffering that a certain person was to undergo. God always has a reason for what He does.
3. We must remember that God is a righteous God. He does not sin and He does not permit any sin in his presence. Further, according to God's righteous law, all sin leads to death for the sinner. All sin must be punished. Either the guilty must suffer punishment or a substitute upon whom the sin is placed must suffer. In the blood sacrifice for sin, it was the innocent animal which suffered and died in place of the sinner. In the story of Abraham we saw that God provided the substitute sacrifice.
4. So this story lesson is about what was going to happen to that substitute sacrifice and it will help us to understand why God was doing it for sinners like us. God's Word says: "For all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. And the wages of sin is death." (*Rom 3:23; 6:23*)

Read From Bible: Isaiah 53:5-6

Tell the Story:**Isaiah Prophesied About The Suffering Servant**

God had promised David that one day a descendant of David would be God's chosen king. David was a descendant of Judah who was a son of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. To Abraham God had promised that one day a descendant of Abraham would bless all people. But even before that, way back in the Garden of Eden, God had said that one day a son of woman would crush the head of the serpent, but the serpent would bruise his heel. What could this mean? If the serpent bruised the son's heel, that means he would suffer. The serpent had allowed Satan to use him in tempting Adam and Eve to disobey God and so to sin. And somehow the serpent—Satan—would cause suffering.

The prophet Isaiah had said that a virgin would give birth to a son who would be called Immanuel or *God with man*, and that he would rule on David's throne. Now the prophet was telling what would happen to that person whom God called his servant. (Isaiah 52:13)

God's servant would grow up before God like a tender shoot in the field, like a root out of dry ground. He would look like us, like the people of his day, so there would be no majesty or beauty to attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance would make us desire him.

Instead, he would be despised and rejected even by his own people, a man of sorrows who was familiar with suffering. But he would take up the infirmities (sicknesses and illnesses of the people) and help them by carrying their sorrows.

A time would finally come when his hands, feet and side would be pierced for our wrongdoing. The punishment that would bring peace to many was instead laid upon this suffering servant. Our

healing would come from his wounds.

This would need to happen because we are all like sheep who have gone astray, wandering far from the path of God, each taking his own way; so that the Lord has laid the sin guilt of us all upon the servant. So that he was oppressed and afflicted for us and yet did not open his mouth in protest to defend himself. He would be like a lamb being led to the slaughter or, as a sheep before the shearer is silent, he would not open his mouth.

He would be oppressed and falsely judged and taken away, condemned to die. His death would be among the wicked, but he would be buried among the rich. All this would happen though he had done no violence nor was any deceit found in his mouth.

Yet it was God's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, making his life a guilt offering. After the suffering of his soul he would again see the light of day, that is, he would come back to life and be greatly honored by God.

Yes, God's servant would pour out his life unto death. He would be numbered among those who sinned against God even though innocent of any wrongdoing himself. Doing this he would bear the sin of many and make intercession before God for sinners.

In the days of Moses those who were put to death had their bodies hung upon a tree as a sign of being under God's curse. Could this also be a prophecy about how God's servant was going to die?

God's purpose was to choose one righteous sacrifice to suffer and give his life for the sins of many. God would lay on him our sins. His suffering and wounds would bring us peace with God. It was God's plan that his chosen servant or Anointed One would suffer. He was called the Anointed One because God said that his Spirit would come to rest upon him. God said, "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations."

Let's Talk Some More:

1. God revealed to the prophet Isaiah the story of what was going to happen to God's chosen servant. Why was God's servant called the Anointed One? (*Because he was chosen of God and God's Spirit was upon him.*)
2. Would this person be especially beautiful or appear such that people would desire him? (*No.*)
3. What would he do with people's infirmities—their sicknesses and health problems? (*He would take them upon himself.*)
4. What do you think it means that he was pierced? (*His hands, feet and side were pierced.*)
5. Wrongdoing requires punishment. Is punishment peaceful? (*No.*) Do you agree that someone else can take your punishment so that you can have peace with God? Would you consider yourself like a sheep who has wandered its own way?
6. The servant is pictured like a sheep that is being led to what? (*The slaughter.*) Or like a sheep that is silent before its what? (*Shearer.*) What do you think this means? (*He did not defend himself.*)
7. What does it mean that the servant would die among the wicked? What happens to wicked who are condemned to die? (*They are executed, sometimes in painful ways.*) How then could he be buried among the rich if he dies such a shameful death?
8. What was being hung on a tree a sign of? (*Being under God's curse.*)
9. Who would cause the servant to suffer? (*God.*) On whose behalf would he suffer? (*Ours.*)
10. If the servant poured out his life unto death, does that sound like he did this willingly? (*Yes*)
11. If the servant bore the sin of many and made intercession for transgressors (wrongdoers), does that include us—you, me and all people? (*Yes.*)
12. What do you think one must do to partake of this forgiveness that comes from a substitute sacrifice? If this suffering servant did it for your sake, how can you benefit from it? Soon we'll find out how this can happen.

13. Do you know who this suffering servant, this Anointed One might be?

A Verse to Remember: “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isa 53:6

THE BIRTH OF JESUS ACCORDING TO WORDS OF THE PROPHETS

Scriptures to Study: Genesis 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-2, 7; 40:3; Jeremiah 31:15; Micah 5:2; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Matthew 1:18-24; 2:1-22; Luke 1:11-17, 26-37; 2:1-20

Talk About These Things:

1. Has anyone ever prophesied the future—that is, been able to tell exactly what was going to happen and when? How did they know what was going to happen? Did it happen just as they said?
2. If many people prophesy about the same thing and it happens just as they said, how could they all know what was going to happen? Who told the people what would happen one day?
3. If many people tell about the same thing, could that mean it really happened just as the people said? If many different people living at different times all told about the same person and what would happen, then could it be true?

Read From Bible: Luke 1:26-32; 2:4-7

Tell the Story:**The Birth Of Jesus According To Words Of The Prophets**

When God called Abraham to leave his people and go to a land that God would show him, God promised that one day his descendant would bless all people. God repeated this promise to Isaac, Abraham's son, and to Jacob, Abraham's grandson. It was to Judah, the fourth son of Jacob the prophecy said that one day kings would come from his family and finally a king would come that the everlasting kingdom belonged to. The prophets had said he would be born to a virgin and born in Bethlehem, the home of David. The prophet Jeremiah said there would be weeping for children at that time. And still another said, "My son I have called out of Egypt." His ministry or work would be in Galilee, the northern province, even though Bethlehem is in a southern province. And the prophet Daniel even said when the coming Promised One would be born. Two other prophets named Isaiah and Malachi said that before he was born someone would come to prepare the way before him. Then there was silence for many years with no further word from God about the Promised One.

One day the angel Gabriel appeared to an aged priest named Zechariah saying that God was answering his prayer for a son. Soon his barren wife Elizabeth was with child. The angel said this son would be like the mighty prophet Elijah and he would be the one to prepare the way for the coming of God's Anointed One. Then the angel Gabriel appeared to a young woman named Mary who was herself a descendant of David. She was promised in marriage to Joseph who was also a descendant of David. The angel said her child would be named Jesus and he would be called Son of the Most High. He would inherit the throne of his ancestor David. And, since Mary was still a virgin, God would cause this child to be born through his Holy Spirit. (*He would have the flesh of man but the Spirit of God.*) The angel said, "For nothing is impossible for God."

When Joseph saw that his promised wife was already with child during the time before they came together as husband and wife, he planned to quietly divorce her to prevent any shame or suffering for her. But the angel Gabriel had also appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, "Do not be afraid to take

Mary as your wife. For this child is conceived of the Holy Spirit. He is to be called Jesus.” When Joseph awoke he obeyed the words of the angel and took Mary as his wife but had no union with her until after the child was born. Now Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth in Galilee. The prophet had said the promised child would be born in Bethlehem.

During those days a decree went out from the foreign ruler that all people should return to their ancestral home to be counted in a census. So Joseph took Mary his wife and journeyed to Bethlehem. It was there that time came for Mary’s child to be born. Because many people had arrived for the census, there was no proper room for them in an inn. After the baby was born an angel came to tell some shepherds that in the city of David a Savior was born who was the promised Messiah of God. Then many angels had appeared and praised God in the heavens, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men who are favored by God.” The shepherds went and found Joseph, Mary and the child who was wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger where the animals were fed.

Some time later wise men came from an eastern country saying they had come to find the one born king of the Jews, for they had seen a star as a sign in the heavens which led them to Jerusalem. The wicked King Herod asked the religious leaders to search the holy writings and find where this new king was to be born. They found the words of the prophet Micah who said it would be in Bethlehem. “Go, search for the child, and when you have found him, come and tell me,” the king said. The star led the visitors to Bethlehem to the house where Mary and the child were found. The wise men worshiped and presented gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. The angel appeared to them in a dream and told them to return to their country by another way, without telling King Herod where the child was. King Herod was furious and gave an order that all boy babies two years of age and under in Bethlehem should be killed. Again the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, “Arise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until the king is dead.” Joseph obeyed the angel and remained in Egypt until the angel once again appeared in a dream and said that it was now safe to return home. Instead of going to Bethlehem, Joseph returned to Nazareth in Galilee. The words of the prophets had been fulfilled. The child was born of a virgin, in Bethlehem. And the prophecy was fulfilled that said, “My son have I called out of Egypt.” But in Bethlehem there were many mothers weeping because their sons were killed, just as the prophet said would happen.

Joseph was a carpenter and it was there in Nazareth that Jesus lived and grew to be a man. After the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary had other sons and daughters born to them. (*Mark 6:3*) But Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and of Mary, without an earthly father. Because he was born of God’s Holy Spirit he would be called a Son of God. But he would call himself the Son of Man.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Did God know what going to happen in the future? (*Yes. It was part of his plan to bless ALL people through Abraham’s descendant.*)
2. How did God tell what was going to happen? (*He first gave the message to his prophets. Then God sent an angel to tell the good news.*)
3. Do you think it is important for God to fulfill his promises? (*Yes. Otherwise He would not be telling the truth.*)
4. When the angel spoke to Mary what did he call the child who to be born? (*Son of the Most High.*)
5. How was the child to be born of a virgin? (*God would cause it to happen through his Holy Spirit.*)
6. Why do you think God also gave a sign to the wise men who came from a foreign country? (*They believed God, followed God’s sign to find the child, and gave a testimony by worshiping and giving gifts. Gold is a gift for a king, incense a gift for a priest, and myrrh a gift for someone who is going to suffer and die.*)
7. Would you have believed the words of the prophets about the coming Anointed One?
8. Would you have believed the words of the angel who came to announce his coming birth?

9. Do you believe this child was going to be who the angel said he was? (*Son of the Most High*)
10. Many people in that day also did not believe, but some did. What would help you to believe?
11. If God were sending someone special to live among us as a man, would you agree that God was showing his love for us?

A Verse to Remember: “For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” Heb 2:17

JESUS WAS TESTED BY SATAN

Scriptures to Study: Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:2-12; Luke 3:21-23; 4:1-15; John 1:21-29; 32-34

Talk About These Things:

1. At what age does one become a man? (*In that day a boy was recognized as a “son of the commandment” at age twelve and generally accepted as a man at age thirty.*)
2. If someone saw something happen and told you about it, would you believe his testimony?
3. Can you think of a time when you were tempted to do or say something, but you resisted and did not give in to the temptation? Why did you resist giving in to the temptation? Did you have a reason not to do so?
4. Would you trust someone who had already suffered being tempted by Satan and who had resisted Satan and overcome the temptation?
5. Sometime we talk about respecting a person who has experience. They have learned and become stronger because of their experience. They have overcome temptation perhaps even suffering while doing so. Through their suffering they are victorious.

Read From Bible: Mark 1:9-12; Luke 4:1-4

Tell the Story:**Jesus Was Tested By Satan**

When Jesus was a man of about thirty years of age, he left his home in Nazareth and went to the river where the prophet John was baptizing those were repenting of their sins. John was saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Some were asking John if he were the prophet Elijah, or the Messiah of God. “No,” he said, “I am the voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’” “Then why do you baptize?” the people asked. “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. He will baptize you with God’s Holy Spirit. I am unworthy to loosen his sandals.” Then Jesus came to John and asked to be baptized. In this way Jesus identified himself with the coming kingdom of God that John preached about.

So John baptized Jesus and while he was praying as he came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit of God came down on Jesus like a dove. A voice spoke from heaven saying, “You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased.” (*Psalm 2:7*) Later John said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Then John gave testimony saying: “I saw God’s Spirit come down from heaven and remain on Jesus. I was told by the Spirit this would happen. I testify he is the Son of God.”

Then Jesus, filled with God’s Holy Spirit, was led by the Spirit into the desert where for forty days he was tempted by Satan. During the forty days Jesus fasted and prayed. At the end of the time he was very hungry and tired. Then the devil, that is Satan, came to Jesus and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

Jesus answered him, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord’.” (*Deuteronomy 8:3*)

Next the devil led Jesus up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the

world. And he said to Jesus, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you bow down and worship me, it will all be yours.”

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” (*Deuteronomy 6:13*)

A third time the devil tempted Jesus by having him stand on the highest point of the temple in Jerusalem “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written in the holy Scriptures: ‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” (*Psalms 91:11-12* See, even the devil quotes Scripture for his own purposes.)

Again Jesus answered him saying, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” (*Deuteronomy 6:16*)

When the devil had finished this tempting, he left Jesus until another opportune time. In the future the devil would test Jesus again and again by sending people to ask foolish questions and to falsely accuse him. After Satan departed angels came and attended Jesus. And so Jesus returned to his home in Galilee in the power of God’s Holy Spirit. News about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught God’s Word in their worship halls, and everyone was praising him.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Who was the prophet John? (*A prophet sent by God to prepare the way for the coming of the Anointed One. And he was to preach about repentance from sin and the coming kingdom of God.*)
2. Were John’s words and testimony true? (*Yes. He was there as a witness when it happened. And God had revealed his words to John by the Holy Spirit. God does not lie, nor does his Spirit lie.*)
3. Can you think of some ways we might be called the “sons of God”? Remember that God made Adam the first man in God’s own image. Does being called a “son” mean a special relationship?
4. Why do you think Jesus asked John to baptize him? (*To identify with John’s preaching about the coming kingdom of God.*)
5. If you had been present that day listening to John, would you been willing to repent from your sins (wrongdoing against God) and be baptized in the river? If not, why not? There were many people who came to hear John because they were curious, but their heart was not right with God.
6. Why do you think Satan wanted to tempt or test Jesus? (*Jesus was a special person sent from God, who was born of God’s Holy Spirit. It would be a great victory for Satan to cause Jesus to sin against God.*)
7. Did Satan come to test Jesus while he was rested and strong, or when he was hungry, tired and weak? (*When he was hungry, tired and weak.*)
8. Why do you think Satan asked Jesus to use his power to turn the stone into bread? (*Satan knew Jesus was hungry and wanted him to use the power God gave him in a selfish way.*)
9. Satan said to Jesus, “If you are the Son of God...?” Do you think that Satan knew who Jesus was?
10. How did Jesus answer Satan? (*He quoted what was written in God’s Word.*)
11. If Jesus resisted temptation by Satan by quoting from God’s Word, what does that tell us about Jesus—Was he being obedient to God—obeying what God said to do? (*Yes.*)
12. Do you think that Satan tests or tempts us? (*Read 1 Peter 5:8-9*)
13. Why do you think that God let Satan test Jesus in this way? (*So he would be tempted in every way just as we are. See Hebrews 2:14, 18; 4:15*)
14. Do you know what God’s Word says so that you can resist Satan when he tempts you. The Bible tells us: “Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (*James 4:7*)

We see that Jesus was submitting to God and relying on God’s Word to help him overcome temptation. Later we will see that Jesus fully submitted to God in every way—so that we might receive a special blessing.

A Verse to Remember: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15

or

“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, for he is able to help those who are being tempted.” Hebrews 2:18

JESUS HAD NO PLACE TO CALL HIS HOME

Scriptures to Study: Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 4:18-21; 8:19-22; Mark 3:20-35; 8:34-38; Luke 4:14-30; John 1:11; 7:2-9

Talk About These Things:

1. What would cause you to dislike a person? Their appearance? Their family or background? Their teaching?
2. Have you ever had to leave home and continue to move about without a home to return to?
3. Would you follow someone who moved about continually teaching and healing?
4. Which is more important to you—obeying God or having a comfortable life at home?

Read From Bible: Matthew 8:19-22; Luke 4:28-30

Tell the Story:**Jesus Had No Place To Call His Home**

After Jesus was baptized by John and tempted by Satan, he returned to his own home town of Nazareth. When the day of worship came Jesus went to the worship hall to pray. He was asked to read from the Holy Scriptures and teach from them. The attendant gave Jesus a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. And Jesus read these words:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” When he had finished reading, Jesus rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down to teach.

The eyes of everyone in the worship hall were fixed on Jesus. He said to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” All those present spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this the son of Joseph the carpenter?” they asked. Then Jesus said, “Surely you will quote to me this proverb: ‘Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your home town what we have heard you did in other places.’ But I tell you the truth,” Jesus continued, “no prophet is accepted in his home town.” Then Jesus told two stories about how the prophets of old had helped or healed those who were not descendants of Abraham.

When the people heard these stories and words of Jesus they were furious. They got up, seized Jesus, and drove him out of the town, intending to throw him down from a cliff on the side of the hill where the town stood. But Jesus walked right through the crowd and went his way.

Jesus had called men to follow him. As he was walking beside the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers who were fishermen casting their net into the water. He said to Simon and Andrew, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They left their nets and followed Jesus. Then he saw another two brothers, James and John, preparing their nets. He called them and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed Jesus. And still another named Matthew who was a tax collector. As he was sitting at his booth collecting money Jesus said, “Follow me,” and immediately Matthew left his booth and followed Jesus. In all there were twelve men that Jesus called to be his disciples—men he would teach and travel with.

One day when a crowd had gathered around Jesus, a teacher of the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air

have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

Even Jesus’ own family had rejected him. One day when Jesus had entered a house and a crowd gathered he began to teach them. When Jesus’ family heard about this, they went to take charge of him for they said, “He is out of his mind.” Some of the teachers of the law were there also accusing Jesus of being possessed by the devil saying, “He has an evil spirit.” Jesus rebuked them with a parable saying that a kingdom cannot be divided against itself or it will not stand. How can Satan drive out Satan? No one can enter a strong man’s house and rob him unless he first binds the strong man.”

Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call Jesus. They told him, “Your mother and brothers are looking for you.” Then Jesus looked at the crowd seated all about him in a circle and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

At another time Jesus told the crowd and his disciples: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and for the Good News will save it.”

At the time for one of the feasts in Jerusalem Jesus’ brothers came to him and said, “You ought to leave this place and go to Jerusalem, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do. No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, go show yourself to the world!” His brothers said these things because they did not believe in him.

One of the disciples named John later wrote: “He came to those who were his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God—children born not of natural descent...but born of God.”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Where had Jesus gone on the day of worship? (*To the worship hall to pray.*)
2. What did the leader ask him to do? (*To read from the Holy Scriptures and give a teaching.*)
3. Did the people like the teaching of Jesus? (*Yes, in the beginning. But they did not like what he then began to teach about how God loved and helped all people.*)
4. What did Jesus say about a prophet and the prophet’s own people? (*He was not accepted by his own people.*) Do you remember a prophecy that said the promised Anointed One would be rejected by his own people? (*Read again Isa 53:3*)
5. When Jesus called certain men to follow him what did they do? (*They left their work and began to follow Jesus.*) Do you think they knew who Jesus really was? (*Most likely not.*)
6. Do you think the teacher of the law was sincere when he said he would follow Jesus? (*Probably. But Jesus warned him that it would not be easy since Jesus had no home to call his own.*)
7. Again when Jesus was teaching the people who had gathered around him and some were accusing Jesus of being demon-possessed, what did Jesus’ family want to do? (*They thought he was out of his mind. They went to get him and bring him home.*) What do you think Jesus meant when he said that the people sitting around him who do God’s will are his family?
8. What do you think Jesus meant that if anyone would follow him, they must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Jesus? (**Note:** *Don’t explain this now. Let the group talk about it.*)
9. When Jesus’ own brothers came to him to urge him to go to Jerusalem and proclaim who he was, do you think they were sincere? (*No. They were mocking Jesus because they did not believe in him at that time.*) Do you think these words and the earlier words of his family when they came to get him caused Jesus to suffer?
10. We didn’t talk about it in this story but there were people who cared about Jesus. Some of the wealthy women gave money to meet his needs. (*Luk 8:2-3*) Two women and their brother Lazarus were friends of Jesus. He had visited their home with his disciples to rest and eat. (*Luk 10:38-42*) On the night before Jesus was betrayed a man in Jerusalem gave Jesus a room where

he and his disciples could eat the Passover Feast.

A Verse to Remember: “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:11

Scriptures to Study: Isaiah 53:4; Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-11; 3:1-6; 5:24-34

Talk About These Things:

1. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could help people to end their suffering when crippled or sick? Would you like to help people in that way?
2. Who do you turn to when there is sickness or some disability? Are they able to help?
3. When you see someone who is sick or disabled in some way, do you look down upon that person because of their problem? Is there shame in being sick or disabled?
4. In the Sabbath Law God gave to Moses (5th Commandment) it said the Sabbath was to be honored. Other laws said what could and what could not be done on the Sabbath or holy day. Some interpreted this law strictly even if it meant not helping someone who was in need. Jesus interpreted this law differently.

Read From Bible: Mark 1:40-42

Tell the Story:

Jesus Healed The Sick And The Suffering

One day as Jesus walked along a man with leprosy came to him and fell on his knees before Jesus begging him saying, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." For in that day lepers were considered to be unclean people and no one would ever touch a leper. Jesus was filled with compassion for the leper, so he reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," Jesus said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left the man and he was completely cured. Then Jesus sent the man away with a strong warning: "See to it that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the required sacrifice for your cleansing as Moses commanded the people as a testimony of being clean. Instead the man went out and began to talk freely, spreading news about Jesus so that he could no longer enter a town openly. People continued to come to him from everywhere for healing.

A few days later, when Jesus was again in the city, the people heard that he had come home. So many gathered in a house, filling it with people even standing outside the door, so that no one else could enter. Jesus sat inside teaching God's Word to those listening. Some men came, bringing a paralyzed man, carried by his four friends. Since they could not get inside to see Jesus they went upon the roof and made an opening above Jesus and lowered the paralyzed man down on his bed. When Jesus saw the faith on the faces of the four men above, he said to the paralyzed man, "Your sins are forgiven." Now some of the teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit what they were thinking in their hearts, so he said to the teachers, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier to say to the paralytic: 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take up your bed and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take up your bed and go home."

The paralyzed man got up, took his bed and walked out in full view of everyone. All were amazed

and they praised God saying, “We have never seen anything like this before!”

Another time when Jesus went into the worship hall, a man was there with a shriveled hand. Some of the religious leaders were there looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal the man on a worship day.

Jesus said to the man, “Stand up in front of everyone.” Then Jesus asked the people present, “Which is lawful to do on a worship day: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” The people remained silent. Jesus looked around at the people in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” When the man stretched out his hand it was completely restored. Then those who were religious leaders went out and began to make plans how they might kill Jesus.

Another time a large crowd followed Jesus and pressed around him. There was a woman in the crowd who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under many doctors and had spent all the money she had without getting any better. Instead her condition had become worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his robe, because she thought, “If I only touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was at last freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’” But Jesus kept looking around to see who had touched him. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell trembling at Jesus’ feet and told him the whole truth. Jesus said to the woman, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. **Share:** In that day people believed that if you were sick, had leprosy, or were disabled in some way it was God’s punishment because of your sin or that of your parents. (*John 9:1-2*)
2. Why do you think the man with leprosy came to Jesus? (*He believed Jesus could heal him.*)
3. When Jesus touched the leper, was this what people normally did? (*No. People would carefully avoid anyone with leprosy as one who was unclean.*)
4. If you had been the leper would you have done what Jesus commanded, or would you have gone to tell everyone what Jesus had done for you?
5. When Jesus healed the man with the shriveled hand why did the religious leaders accuse Jesus? (*Because he was healing on the Sabbath, a holy day when no work was to be done.*)
6. Do you agree with Jesus that the Sabbath is a day to do good and to heal?
7. Why did the woman with the issue of blood seek out Jesus? (*She believed that Jesus could heal her and end her suffering.*)
8. What did she think that she needed to do to be healed? (*Simply touch Jesus’ clothes.*)
9. Did Jesus know someone had touched his clothes? (*Yes. He felt power go out from him.*)
10. Why do you think the woman was fearful of being discovered? (*She was unclean from her illness and she had touched a holy person. People believed that would make the holy person polluted.*)
11. Was Jesus pleased in what the woman had done? (*Yes. He blessed her and told her to go in peace.*)
12. What did Jesus say had healed the woman? (*Her faith had healed her.*) What could this mean? Earlier when Jesus had visited his home place he could not heal many people. **Read:** *Mark 6:4-6.*
13. Does anyone remember what the prophet Isaiah had to say about God’s Anointed One? **Read:** *Isaiah 53:3.* Would you say this prophecy is being fulfilled by Jesus?
14. Jesus always had compassion on those who needed healing. The people followed Jesus seeking his help to end their suffering. **Read:** *Luke 9:11.*

A Verse to Remember: "...People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed." Matthew 14:35b-36

THE LOST SON WHO SUFFERED

Scriptures to Study: Luke 15:1-2, 11-32

Talk About These Things:

1. Have you ever been impatient to get whatever inheritance would one day come to you?
2. If you received an inheritance right now, what would you do with it? How would you use it?
3. If you realized that what you were doing was wrong, or that you had made a terrible mistake, would you be willing to repent (turn from your error) and confess that you did wrong?
4. If someone had dishonored you and then wasted what you had given them, would you forgive them and show mercy toward them?
5. Have you ever been jealous toward your brother or sister? Did your jealousy make you angry?
6. Would you speak harshly to your father if you were angry?

Read From Bible: Luke 15:13-16

Tell the Story:**The Lost Son Who Suffered**

It happened one day when there were many tax collectors and those considered “sinners” gathered around Jesus to hear his teaching. The Pharisees (those who considered themselves righteous and condemned everyone else) and the teachers of the law were listening and complaining about Jesus. “This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them,” they muttered. So Jesus began to tell some parables about those who rejoiced when what was lost was found. He told this story:

“There was a man who had two sons. The younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of inheritance from the estate.’ So the father divided his property between them. It was the custom in that day for the oldest son to get a double portion and the younger sons only a single portion.

Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had and set off for a distant country. There he wasted his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and the younger son began to be in great need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country who sent him to the fields to feed pigs. The son longed to fill his stomach with the food the pigs were eating. But no one gave him anything to eat.

When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So the son got up and began the journey home.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him. He ran to his son and threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

The father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on my son. Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and prepare a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

Meanwhile the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard the sound of

music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what was happening. ‘Your brother has come home,’ the servant replied. ‘And your father has prepared a feast to celebrate his safe return.’ The older brother became very angry and refused to go in. The father went out to him and pleaded for him to come in and join the celebration, but he would not. Instead he angrily told his father how he had worked for him all those years with no celebration. And now his brother has come home after wasting all his inheritance and been received back. So he spoke harshly to his father.

‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because your brother was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found.’”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. You’ve heard the story, let’s talk about the three people in it. First, what did you think about the request of the younger son? Did he dishonor his father by such a request? As a younger son he was entitled to one share of the inheritance. His older brother was entitled to two shares.
2. The father gave him his portion of the inheritance. Do you think the father suspected what might happen next?
3. Do you think the father may have suffered as he watched his younger son go away to a distant country?
4. Do you think the younger son knew what might happen one day? (*Most likely not.*)
5. How was the younger son suffering? (*He was hungry and no one gave him anything. He was doing shameful work among pigs, and even desired to eat their food.*)
6. What did the younger son confess? (*He had sinned against heaven and against his father.*)
7. How did the younger son decide to end his suffering? (*He would return to his father and ask to be one of the hired servants.*)
8. Was the father expecting his lost son to return home? (*Yes. He was waiting and watching and saw his son even when he was a long way off.*)
9. When the son drew near what did the father do? (*He ran to his son and threw his arms around him and kissed him.*) Do you think the father still loved his son? Do you think the father forgave his son for what he had done?
10. How did the father show his love for the lost son? (*He restored him to sonship with a ring, and clothed him with a best robe and shoes. And he called for a feast and celebration to rejoice at his son’s return.*)
11. What was the older son’s attitude when he heard what was happening? (*He was angry and jealous at the attention his brother was getting.*)
12. When the father tried to reason with the older brother, what was his attitude toward his father? (*He was harsh and angry and accused his father of showing favoritism to the younger brother who had wasted his inheritance.*)
13. If you had been the younger brother, would you have decided to confess your wrong doing and return home to face your father in shame?
14. If you were the father, would you have run to embrace your lost returning son, and restored him as a son?
15. If you were the older brother, would you have acted jealously and spoken harshly to your father when he tried to reason with you?
16. Who caused the suffering in this story?
17. Who suffered in this story?
18. At the end of the story who was causing suffering?
19. If you were the son in the story, and if God were the father, would you confess your sin (wrongdoing) before him and ask for his mercy? There was suffering because of wrongdoing, but there was blessing and joy when the son repented of his wrongdoing and confessed it.
20. Jesus told this story to remind the listeners that there is rejoicing in heaven when even one sinner repents and returns to the Father.

A Verse to Remember: “Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.” Isa 55:7

JESUS PREDICTS HIS OWN SUFFERING AND DEATH

Scriptures to Study: Isaiah 53:1-12; Mark 8:27-31 (Luke 9:18-22); 9:31-32 (Luke 9:44-45); 10:32-34 (Matthew 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34)

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you know when or how you will die? Can anyone know this?
2. Can anyone know who will be the ones to cause them to suffer and die, even before it comes to pass?
3. Do you believe that all prophecy must be fulfilled? That is, what God says will happen, that it will happen just as God said?
4. What would you do if you tried again and again to share your deep sorrow and suffering with others but they could not understand what you were saying or talking about?
5. Do you have any doubt in your heart about who Jesus was?
6. Now we will see this is exactly what happened to Jesus.

Read From Bible: Mark 10:32-34

Tell the Story:**Jesus Predicts His Own Suffering And Death**

Jesus knew that he was God's Messiah. He knew what the prophets had said about the Messiah and what would happen to him. Jesus had chosen twelve men to be his disciples (learners) who would travel with him and he would teach them. Jesus taught his followers even when the crowds pressed around to hear him and touch him. Jesus also taught his disciples when alone and privately.

As Jesus taught and healed people many thought that he was a great prophet. Others asked where did he get his learning since he had not studied under the great teachers of that day. Jesus answered them: "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the one who sent him is a man of truth." (*John 7:16-18*)

Jesus had asked his disciples, "Who do the people say that I am?" They replied, "Some say the prophet John who baptized, others say the prophet Elijah, and still others, that you are one of the great prophets of long ago who has come back to life." "But what about you?" Jesus asked. "Who do you say that I am?" The disciple named Simon Peter answered, "The Christ (Messiah) of God." Then Jesus warned the disciples strictly not to tell this to anyone. For he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day raised to life." (*Luke 9:18-22*)

At another time Jesus took his disciples aside and said for them to listen carefully to what he was going to say. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man was going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise. But the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant by his words, it was hidden from them, so they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it. (*Mark 10:31-32 & Luke 9:45*)

A third time when Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, the disciples were astonished at his words and some who followed were afraid. Jesus took his twelve disciples aside privately and told them plainly what was going to happen to him. “We are going to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles (the foreign rulers), who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Now the prophets had said these things hundreds of years before Jesus was born. David said that God would not abandon his Holy One to the grave—that is, he would be raised to life again. (*Psalm 16:10*) Again David prophesied that God’s Holy One would be insulted and mocked. They would pierce his hands and feet. (*Psalm 22:16*) He said that God’s Holy One would be betrayed by a close friend. (*Psalm 41:9*) And he would be hated without any reason. (*Psalm 69:4*) The prophet Isaiah said he would be beaten (*Isaiah 50:6*), put to death among sinners (*vs 9*), but after his suffering and death would again see the light of life. (*vs 11*) God’s prophets had revealed what was going to happen. Jesus knew the words of the prophets. And Jesus knew that they were talking about him. But his disciples could not understand this, but later they would.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Did Jesus know that he was God’s Messiah? (*Yes. But he did not tell everybody. One person he did tell was a Samaritan woman who was waiting for the Messiah to come and explain everything. To her he plainly said: “I am the Messiah of God.” John 4:25-26*)
2. Did the disciples know who Jesus was? (*At least one did. Simon Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah.*)
3. Where did Jesus get the words that he spoke? (*From the one who sent him.*) Does anyone know who that was? (*Remember what the angel said about Jesus when his birth was announced.*)
4. Why do you think Jesus wanted to tell his disciples and followers what was going to happen to him? When there is deep sorrow or suffering in your heart, do you want to share it with your family and close friends?
5. Who was going to turn against Jesus? (*The elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law. These were the religious leaders in that day.*)
6. In what ways would Jesus be made to suffer? (*He would be rejected, betrayed, mocked, spit on, flogged (severely beaten), and killed.*)
7. After Jesus would be condemned to death by the religious leaders, who would he be handed over to, the ones who would actually make him suffer and die? (*The Gentiles—the foreign rulers and their soldiers.*)
8. After Jesus had suffered cruelly and died, what would happen to him? (*He would be raised to life again in three days.*) If one is raised to life again, that means he was dead before being raised.
9. Did Jesus’ disciples have difficulty in understanding these things about his suffering? (*Yes.*)
10. Do you have difficulty in understanding about Jesus’ suffering? If you had been one of Jesus’ followers would you also have trouble understanding what he was saying?
11. Do you believe the prophecies which were spoken by God’s prophets about Jesus were true?
12. Soon we will see how these prophecies were fulfilled just as the prophets and Jesus said would happen. Then you can decide for yourself about Jesus and who he was.

A Verse to Remember: “But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.” Acts 3:18

JESUS ENDS SUFFERING BECAUSE OF DEMONS

Scriptures to Study: Luke 4:31-37 (Mark 5:1-20); 8:26-39; 9:37-43; 13:10-17

Talk About These Things:

1. Do demons torment you and cause you to suffer? How about anyone in your family? Or anyone that you may know in your village?
2. Do you remember the story about how the demons came to be evil? Do you know who is the Prince of demons (*the one who rules over them and causes them to do evil*)?
3. What do you do when someone is possessed or harmed by a demon? Who do you call for help?
4. The devil is called a liar (*Jhn 8:44*) and the evil spirits or demons are like him. But there is one thing they cannot lie about. Do you know what it is? You will see in the following story.

Read From Bible: Luke 4:31-35

Tell the Story:**Jesus Ends Suffering Because of Demons**

It happened when Jesus first returned to his home province of Galilee. It was on the Sabbath, the holy day of worship, and Jesus had gone to the synagogue or worship hall to pray. He was invited to teach God's Word. The people present were amazed at his teaching because as he taught his message had great authority. Among the people in the worship hall was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. The man cried out in a very loud voice, "Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" Jesus commanded the demon. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all, causing him to shake violently and with a loud shriek (*Mark 1:26*) came out of the man. The people who saw this happen were amazed and asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with great authority? He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." So news about Jesus began to spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. Demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But Jesus rebuked them and would not let them speak, because they knew he was the Christ." (*Luke 4:41*)

One day when Jesus and his disciples had crossed over the Sea of Galilee to the region of the Ten Cities, as Jesus stepped ashore from the boat, he was met by a demon-possessed man. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at Jesus' feet, shouting loudly, "What do you want with me, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains. He would cry out and cut himself with stones.

Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, for many demons had gone into the man. And the demons were begging Jesus not to send them away from that place. A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus for permission to enter the pigs. And Jesus gave them permission to leave the man and enter the pigs. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep shore into the lake

and were drowned.

Those tending the pigs went to tell the owners and others in the town. When the people came to see what had happened they found the man who had been possessed of demons now sitting at the feet of Jesus in his right mind, and someone had given him clothing to wear. The people were afraid and asked Jesus to leave their place. The man begged to go with Jesus. But Jesus said to him, "Return home and tell how much God had done for you."

Another time a crowd met Jesus and a man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. An evil spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions, so that he foams at the mouth. The demon never leaves him and is destroying him." While the boy was coming to Jesus the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. The people were all amazed at the greatness of God.

On another Sabbath day Jesus was again teaching in the worship hall. A woman was there who had been crippled by an evil spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then Jesus put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. But the worship leader was angry because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. So he said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days and not on the Sabbath."

But Jesus answered him, "You hypocrites! Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath from what bound her?" When Jesus said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. In the story of the man in the worship hall possessed by the evil spirit, what did he say about Jesus? (*He feared Jesus because he asked if Jesus had come to destroy him and the other spirits. Then he said, "I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"*)
2. What did Jesus command the spirit to do? (*Be quiet and to come out of the man.*)
3. Did the spirit obey Jesus? (*Yes.*) What did the people have to say? (*Jesus gives orders to the evil spirits and they come out.*)
4. What did the demon-possessed man who met Jesus by the lake have to say? (*What do you want with me, Jesus of Nazareth, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me.*)
5. Did the evil spirit fear Jesus? (*Yes.*) Did the spirit humble himself before Jesus? (*Yes.*)
6. What did the spirit ask Jesus' permission to do? (*To leave the man and enter the pigs.*)
7. What did the people find when they came to see what happened? (*There was the man, now in his right mind, clothed and seated before Jesus.*)
8. Did the people want Jesus to remain in that place? (*No. They were afraid of him and wanted him to go away.*)
9. When the man asked to go with Jesus what did Jesus tell him? (*Return home and tell how much God had done for him.*)
10. When Jesus saw the woman in the worship hall who was bent over and crippled, what did he ask her to do? (*To come forward to stand before Jesus.*)
11. What did Jesus say to the woman? (*You are set free from your infirmity.*) Then what did Jesus do to the woman? (*He put his hands on her and immediately she was healed.*)
12. Was the worship leader pleased with what Jesus did? (*No. He thought Jesus had broken the Sabbath law when there was to be no work done.*)
13. What did Jesus say to the worship leader? (*You hypocrite! Shouldn't this woman, a daughter of Abraham, who was bound by Satan for eighteen years, be set free?*)
14. Do we need to talk about why Jesus did the things he did, even on the Sabbath Day when the Law of Moses forbid work? (Read John 5:16-23.) These verses will certainly stir up some discussion.

Jesus was saying that he only did the works he saw the Father doing. He was obeying the Father. (Read John 7:16-19) Jesus not only does what he sees the Father doing, but he speaks what he hears the Father speaking. And he does this to honor the Father.

15. Why do you think the evil spirits were afraid of Jesus? Who created the Spirits? Who was Jesus?

A Verse to Remember: “Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.’” John 5:17

Scriptures to Study: Luke 7:11-17; 10:38-42; John 11:1-44

Talk About These Things:

1. What is our greatest sorrow? Is it when someone we love very much dies? Perhaps an only son? Or a beloved brother? Or a mother or father?
2. What has been your greatest sorrow? Talk about the suffering that comes when we are sorrowful and grieving for a dead loved one.
3. Wouldn't it be wonderful if there were someone who held the power over death, so that he could restore the dead to life again?
4. What if a greater concern is life beyond this life? And what if there were two deaths? First the death of this body we have due to disease, accident, murder, or old age. And then the death of our very soul? Actually, the soul does not die like our body dies, but it can die in another way. In our second story Jesus talks about life beyond this life.

Read From Bible: John 11:1-4, 40-44

Tell the Story:**Jesus Ends A Widow's Sorrow And Two Sisters' Grief**

Jesus was traveling with his disciples and a large crowd who followed him. When they came to a town called Nain, as he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out. He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When Jesus saw the woman, he had compassion on her, and said, "Don't cry." Then he went near and touched the coffin, and those who carried it stood still. Jesus said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" the dead man sat up and began to talk. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother. The people gathered around were filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said, "God has come to help his people." This news about Jesus spread throughout the surrounding country.

There were two sisters named Mary and Martha who had a brother named Lazarus. Their village of Bethany was near Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples had stopped there before to eat and take rest. So Jesus and that family were dear friends. A time came when Lazarus fell very sick. So Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus saying, "Lord, Lazarus, the one you love is sick." When Jesus heard this he said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Even though Jesus loved the family very much he remained in that place two more days. Then he said to his disciples, "Let us go to see Lazarus." The disciples reminded Jesus that some of the religious leaders were trying to stone Jesus because he made himself equal with God.

Jesus had said to the disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will soon get well." Jesus had been speaking of death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. Let us go to him."

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had already been dead and in the tomb for four days.

Many friends had come from Jerusalem to comfort the sisters in the death of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “If only you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”

Jesus replied, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” But Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” Martha told Jesus, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” After she had said this, Martha went to call her sister Mary, “The Teacher is here and is asking for you.”

Mary got up quickly and went to Jesus and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.” When Jesus saw her weeping and her friends also weeping he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled and he, too, wept. Then he said, “Where have you laid his body?” “Come and see, Lord,” they replied. When some of the people saw Jesus weeping they accused him saying, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept Lazarus from dying?” Others said, “Look! See how much Jesus loved Lazarus.”

When they came to the tomb, Jesus commanded, “Take away the stone, open the tomb.” At once Martha objected, “But, Lord, there will be a bad smell, for he has been dead four days.” Then Jesus said, “Didn’t I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone and Jesus looked toward heaven and began to pray:

“Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, so that they may believe you sent me.” When Jesus had finished praying he said in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of cloth, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave cloths and let him go.”

Many of those who had come from Jerusalem to visit, when they saw what Jesus did, they put their faith in Jesus. But some of them went to report to the religious leaders what Jesus had done. After the religious leaders had talked among themselves they began to make plans to kill Jesus.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. When Jesus saw the dead man being carried out to the burial place and his weeping mother following, what Jesus say to the mother? (*Don’t cry.*) What does this tell us about Jesus? (*He felt compassion for her and he knew something good was about to happen.*)
2. What did Jesus do to bring the dead man back to life? (*He spoke to him and said, “Get up.”*)
3. What did the people say when they saw what happened? (*A great prophet has appeared among us. God has come to help his people.*)
4. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, what did he do? (*He remained in there two more days.*)
5. If Jesus had left immediately would he have arrived before Lazarus died? (*No. Jesus waited only two days. But when he arrived in Bethany Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.*)
6. **Note:** *There may be something you didn’t know about. In that day people believed that when you died your spirit stayed near the body and could re-enter it at any time and revive up to the third day when the body was decaying and giving a bad smell. So if Lazarus had been dead four days then he was really dead! Remember that Martha said there would be a bad smell if the tomb were opened.*
7. What did Martha say to Jesus when she first came out to him? (*Lord, if only you had been here my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask.*)
8. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies”?
9. When Jesus wept was it because he could not do anything to help the sisters? (*No. He was sad because they were sad and did not understand that he was able to give life back to Lazarus.*)

10. What did Jesus say the sisters would see if only they believed? (*The glory of God.*) What do you think he meant by that? (*He was giving God the glory for what was about to happen.*)
11. Why did Jesus pray the words he spoke? (*So the people would hear him and know that God had sent him. God always heard him when he prayed.*)
12. What did he command Lazarus to do? (*To come out.*) Did Lazarus return to life? (*Yes.*) When some of the people saw what happened what did they do? (*Put their faith in Jesus.*) What did others do? (*Went to give a bad report about Jesus.*) If you had been there, which would you have done? Do you believe Jesus is the resurrection and the life?

A Verse to Remember: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die...” John 11:25

Scriptures to Study: Luke 16:19-31; John 5:45-47

Talk About These Things:

1. Have you ever thought about when you die? Where will your soul go? Will it go to paradise or to the place of torment?
2. Today we have a story about a man who had everything in this life, but he forgot what was needed to prepare for the next life after he died. The story is not against rich men, for there are two rich men in the story, one was Abraham who was very wealthy in his day because God blessed him.
3. Do you know who your father is? Jesus knew who his Father was, but some didn't believe him.

Read From Bible: Luke 16:19-22

Tell the Story:

Unbelief Leads To Suffering—Lazarus & The Rich Man

Jesus was teaching and the Pharisees who loved money were listening and sneering at Jesus. They were a group of people who considered themselves very righteous, and who often criticized Jesus because he did not follow their teaching and practice. They did not believe he was even a prophet. And they claimed to follow Moses as their prophet and teacher. So Jesus said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until the time of the prophet John who came preaching repentance and baptism. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached." Then Jesus told them this story.

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen. He lived in great luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, whose body was covered with sores. And he longed to eat the scraps of food that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in great torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am suffering in this fire."

But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things. But now he is comforted here and you are suffering in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that we cannot come to you and you cannot come to us."

Then the man answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not come to this place of torment."

Abraham replied, "Your brothers have Moses and the Prophets; your brothers should listen to what they say."

"No, father Abraham," the man said, "but if someone from the dead goes to warn them, they will repent."

Then Abraham said to the man, “If your brothers do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not and be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

At another time Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?”

At another time Jesus was speaking to the people and said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” The Pharisees challenged Jesus saying, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf my testimony is true. For I know where I came from and where I am going. You judge by human standards...my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father who sent me. In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am the one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the one who sent me—the Father.”

Then they asked Jesus, “Where is your Father?”

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”

“Who are you?” they asked. “Just as I have been claiming all along.” Jesus replied. “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.” Those listening did not understand that Jesus was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know who I am.” Even as Jesus spoke many of those listening to him put their faith in him. (*John 8:12-19, 25-28, 30*)

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Why did the Pharisees not like Jesus? (*Because he did not follow their teachings and ways.*)
2. Why did Jesus tell the Pharisees the story about the rich man and Lazarus? (*Because they loved money and they said they followed Moses as their prophet and teacher.*) So Jesus warned them.
3. What can you say about the rich man in the story? (*He lived in luxury with no needs at all.*)
4. What can you say about Lazarus? (*He was a beggar, covered with sores, most likely crippled, and hungry for even the scraps from the rich man’s table.*)
5. Both men died. What was the difference in where each went? (*The beggar was carried by the angels to the place where Abraham was and now was comforted. The rich man was buried and found himself in hell, or the place of torment, suffering thirst in the flames.*)
6. In life did the rich man ever provide for any of the beggar Lazarus’ needs? (*No.*) Now that the rich man has died and is suffering who does he want to help him? (*Lazarus, to dip his finger and cool the rich man’s tongue.*)
7. What did Abraham say? (*In life the rich man received good things and Lazarus bad things. Now Lazarus is comforted and the rich man is in agony. And it was impossible to go from where Abraham was to where the rich man was, or for the rich man to come to Abraham.*)
8. Now what was the rich man concerned about? (*He wanted Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers so they would not come to the place of suffering, too.*)
9. Did Abraham agree to send Lazarus to warn the five brothers? (*No. He said the brothers already had a warning in the words of Moses and the Prophets. They had better listen to them.*)
10. **Note:** *We don’t know the rich man’s name. Lazarus’ name is from “Eleazar” which means “He whom God helps”.*
11. Finally, the rich man begs Abraham again saying that if someone rises from the dead to warn the brothers, then they will listen. What did Jesus say then? (*If the brothers did not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.*)
12. The Lazarus in this story is not the same as the brother of Mary and Martha. Do you remember in

that story Jesus did raise that Lazarus from the dead. When the people saw this, some believed in Jesus and some didn't.

13. A time was coming soon when again the people would have opportunity to believe when someone was raised from the dead. Some would believe, but many did not, and even today refuse to believe. Just remember this story about the suffering of the rich man who did not believe the words of Moses and the Prophets until it was too late.

A Verse to Remember: “The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

THIS IS MY BODY BROKEN FOR YOU & MY BLOOD POURED OUT FOR THE SINS OF MANY

Scriptures to Study: Isaiah 53:5, 10; Matthew 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-31; Luke 22:1-6, 7-23; John 13:1-14:12

Talk About These Things:

1. If you knew that your time to live was very short, what would you want to say to your family and friends?
2. What symbols or signs would you use to demonstrate your love for your family and loved ones?
3. Can you recall a time when an older or former covenant or agreement was set aside and a new one was sealed or agreed upon?
4. Remember in the Old Testament (Taurat) stories how blood had to be shed to cover one's sin?
5. Breaking bread or eating together is a sign of fellowship or oneness. The bread must be broken for the eaters to have oneness in eating.

Read From Bible: Luke 22:19-20

Tell the Story:

This Is My Body Broken For You & My Blood Poured Out For The Sins Of Many

One of the disciples Jesus had chosen was named Judas. Jesus knew that Judas would betray him in fulfillment of prophecy. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. The religious leaders were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, but they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered into Judas who then went to the religious leaders and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus into their hands. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. Judas agreed with them and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

Jesus sent two of his disciples into Jerusalem to prepare the Passover meal. Now the meal was a memorial from the time when God was leading the descendants of Abraham out of Egypt. There was a sheep or goat roasted without breaking any of its bones, bread baked without yeast, a sauce made with bitter herbs and salt water to remind the people of their tears while slaves in Egypt, and drink made from the blood of the grape.

When the hour came Jesus reclined with his disciples to eat the Passover meal. After they had eaten Jesus took bread, gave thanks to God, and broke it, and gave to each of the disciples saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to his disciples and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for the sins of many."

There arose a dispute among the disciples as to which of them was considered the greatest. Jesus got up and removed his outer garment and tied a towel about his waist and took a basin of water and began to wash the feet of each disciple. The disciple named Simon Peter forbid him to wash his feet. But Jesus said that unless he washed Simon Peter's feet then he had no part with Jesus. Jesus again took his place at the table and said, "The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Who is greater, the one at the table, or the one who serves? But I am among you as one who serves."

Then Jesus said, "The hand of the one who betrays me is with mine on the table. The disciples

began to question among themselves who this might be. When one of the disciples asked Jesus who the betrayer might be, Jesus replied, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, when he had dipped the bread in the sauce of bitter herbs, he handed it to Judas and said, "Go, and do quickly what you are about to do." As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him and he got up and left the room. The other disciples thought since Judas had charge of the money purse he had gone to give money to the poor or buy more food for the feast.

When Judas was gone Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. My children, I will be with you only a little longer. A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you." One of the disciples asked Jesus where he was going and why one could not follow now. Then Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you may be where I am."

Another of the disciples said they did not know where Jesus was going or the way. Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well."

Still another disciple said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing the work."

Then Jesus promised to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit in his name to be a Comforter and Counselor. When the Spirit of truth comes he will testify about Jesus. He will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears. And Jesus reminded them, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. For the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I have told you these things, so that you may have peace. My peace I give you. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Let's Talk Some More:

1. Can you remember why the religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus? (*He healed on the Sabbath Day, they were jealous that many people were attracted to Jesus and liked his teaching and miracles, and Jesus claimed that he had come from God.*)
2. Who agreed to betray Jesus? (*Judas. Read the prophecy in Psalm 41:9.*) For how much money? (*Read the prophecy in Zechariah 11:12-13.*)
3. When was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the Passover meal, begun? (*In the days of Moses while in Egypt. It was on the night when the death angel passed over the homes of God's people.*)
4. When Jesus took the bread, blessed it and broke it, what did he say? (*This is my body; do this in remembrance of me.*) What do you think that means? (*Read John 6:33, 35, 50, 51*)
5. When Jesus took the cup of drink and blessed it he gave it to his disciples. What did he say then? (*This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for the sins of many.*) What do you think that means? (*Read Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:15, 19-20, 22.*)
6. Do the thought of a broken body and blood being poured out remind you of suffering? Could this be a picture of what was about to happen to Jesus?
7. Why did Jesus wash his disciples feet? (*To teach them to be humble and willing to serve one another.*)
8. Did Jesus know who was going to betray him? (*Yes.*) Was the prophecy fulfilled in what Judas did? (*Yes.*)
9. What do you think it means when Jesus says that he is the way and the truth and the life?
10. What do you think it means when Jesus says no one comes to the Father but my him?

11. What promises did Jesus make? (*To prepare a place for the disciples, to come back for them, to send the Holy Spirit, to give the disciples his peace.*)
12. Jesus said, “The Father loves you because you loved me and believe that I am from God.” Do you believe this. If not, why not? Jesus said these were the Father’s words he was speaking.

A Verse to Remember: “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:40

THE NIGHT THAT JESUS SUFFERED IN PRAYER

Scriptures to Study: Matthew 6:9-13; 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 11:2-4; 22:39-46; John 17:1-26; 18:1-11

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you pray? When you pray, do you always pray the same words over and over, or do you talk with God, sharing from your heart?
2. When there is great need in your life, who do you share your need with? When you suffer, who do you share your suffering with?
3. In your prayer would you ask for what you want, or would you ask that God's will be done?
4. Jesus was a man of prayer. **Read Psalm 109:4.** This was a prophecy about Jesus. **Read Mark 1:35; 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12.**

Read From Bible: John 17:1-5

Tell the Story:

The Night That Jesus Suffered In Prayer

Jesus was a man of prayer. He would often go alone to a quiet place to pray. He had taught that the words he spoke were not his own, but those of the Father. Jesus talked with his Father in prayer. When the disciples asked him to teach them to pray, he taught the way they were to pray. He said to them, "When you pray, say: "Our Father in heaven, your name is holy, may your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Jesus had joined his disciples for the Passover Meal during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. After eating the meal Jesus had taken bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, "This is my body. Do this in remembrance of me." He had also taken the cup of drink and blessed it and gave it to the disciples to drink. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured for the sins of many." He told them he must go away to prepare a place for them, but he would return for them so they might be where he was. And he said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me." After teaching the disciples and encouraging them, he led them out of that place and out of the city of Jerusalem, across the valley to a quiet garden called Gethsemane to pray.

The disciple named Judas had gone to betray Jesus and to make the arrangement for the religious leaders to capture Jesus.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." Then he took the one called Simon Peter and the brothers named James and John and began to be very sorrowful and troubled. He said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch while I pray." Then Jesus went a little farther, about a stone's throw, and fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." An angel from heaven appeared to Jesus and strengthened him. Jesus was in great anguish. He prayed more earnestly and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

After praying this he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping for the hour was late. "Could you not pray with me for one hour?" he asked Simon Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will

not fall into temptation.” Then Jesus went away and prayed a second time, “My Father, if it be possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

When he came back, he again found the disciples sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and then went away once more and prayed the third time saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

And while Jesus was still speaking a crowd came up and the disciple named Judas was leading them. The betrayer had arrived.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Was Jesus a man of prayer? (*Yes. The prophets had said he would be.*)
2. What did Jesus do when he prayed? (*He talked with his Father.*)
3. Jesus had prayed for the Father to glorify the Son. What had Jesus done to glorify his Father on earth? (*Jesus had completed all the work God gave him to do. John 17:4*)
4. After the Passover Meal what did Jesus and his disciples do? (*They went out of the city to a quiet garden where Jesus would pray.*)
5. When Jesus began to pray, he fell on his face on the ground. What did he ask God to do? (*If it be possible, to take away the cup from him.*) What do you think this prayer means? What was the “cup” that Jesus mentioned? (*Let the group talk a bit but lead them to consider that Jesus knew what was going to happen the next day—that he would suffer God’s wrath and die.*)
6. Each time Jesus prayed what did you end by saying? (*Not my will, but your will be done.*) Jesus was submitting to his Father’s will—not what Jesus wanted to do, but what God wanted him to do.
7. Can you describe Jesus as he was praying? (*He was very disturbed and sorrowful. He prayed so earnestly that his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*)
8. What did the disciples do while Jesus was praying? (*They fell asleep.*)
9. How many times did Jesus go away to pray? (*Three times.*)
10. Do you think Jesus was satisfied that God’s will would be done? Do you think that Jesus had fully submitted to God’s will?
11. If you had been one of the disciples would you have remained awake? Remember the hour was late and they were filled from eating and drinking during the Passover Meal.
12. Do you think the disciples understood what was about to happen? (*They probably did not.*)
13. Jesus suffered greatly in his prayer that night. He had prayed for himself. Earlier he had prayed for his disciples (*John 17:9*) and for those who believed in him (*John 17:20*).
14. Are you ready to believe that Jesus was who he said he was? If you are, then his prayer for you is: “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” (*John 17:24*)

A Verse to Remember: “Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” John 17:3

Note: *If these lessons are too direct or are moving too fast for your listeners to follow, then feel free to soften them or slow them down. Possibly some of the stories may be too long or could be shortened to keep a tighter focus on one central theme. There is a tension between being thorough and moving too*

quickly with a people who in the beginning are far away from truth. The attempt has been made to begin emphasizing who Jesus was at every opportunity and to give opportunity for the listeners to find their place in these stories—whether they are able to believe or still they must reject the stories and who Jesus was.

Fervent prayer in preparation and presentation is especially needed when approaching the time of invitation for listeners to express their faith in Jesus, believing that he was who he said he was.

Scriptures to Study: Matthew 26:57-27:31; Mark 14:53-15:20; Luke 22:63-23:25; John 18:19-19:16

Talk About These Things:

1. What kind of a person would betray another? Especially if the person were doing many good things?
2. Have you ever been falsely accused? If so, what did those accusing you hope to gain?
3. Have you been unjustly punished even though not guilty of any wrongdoing? Have you been mocked and humiliated, spit upon and struck unjustly? Do you know someone who has?
4. If these bad things happened to you, what would be your response? Would you want to strike back, to retaliate? What if a person just received this kind of treatment but did not say anything?

Read From Bible: Mark 14:55-64

Tell the Story:**Jesus Is Betrayed, Falsely Accused, Beaten And Mocked**

Soon after Jesus began to heal people he was already being condemned to die. When Jesus healed the man with the shriveled hand on the Sabbath Day, the religious leaders began to plot how they might kill Jesus. (*Mark 3:6*) Another time the religious leaders picked up stones to stone Jesus for blasphemy because they said he claimed to be God. (*John 10:31-33*) When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the religious leaders again talked about how to put Jesus to death. (*John 11:53*) They feared to capture him in a public place while the crowds were present, because Jesus was very popular with the people. So they looked for some sly way to catch him when he was alone.

Then Satan entered Judas and he went to the religious leaders and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. He began to watch for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them. On the night Jesus ate the Passover Meal with his disciples, Judas went out to betray Jesus. Later Jesus led the disciples to the quiet garden to pray. Now Judas knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding the soldiers and some officials from the religious leaders. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

Jesus went out to meet them. "Who is it you want?" He asked. "Jesus of Nazareth." They replied. Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the officials arrested Jesus, bound him and led him away. The disciples were afraid and scattered into the night.

At daybreak they led Jesus before Caiphas the high priest and the council of elders who questioned him. Jesus replied, "I have spoken openly to the world. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said." "If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us." Many false witnesses were brought to give testimony. The Law of Moses required that the testimony of two reliable witnesses were needed before a man could be put to death. But their testimony was not in agreement. So high priest said to Jesus, "Tell us plainly, are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

When the high priest heard these words he tore his robes and shouted, "Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned Jesus to death.

Then some began to spit at him. They blindfolded Jesus and struck him with their fists saying, "Prophecy! Who hit you?" The guards took him and beat him and said many other insulting things to him. It was very early in the morning when the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law reached their decision. So they handed Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor.

The chief priests accused Jesus of many things. They said that Jesus claimed to be Christ a king, and that he was leading a rebellion against the foreign rulers and telling people not to pay taxes. Pilate questioned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied, "but my kingdom is not of this world." Again Pilate asked Jesus, "Aren't you going to answer the charges against you?" But Jesus made no reply. Then Pilate said, "I have the power to release you or put you to death." Jesus replied, "You have no power but what has been given you from above." Then Pilate became afraid and looked for some way to release Jesus.

So Pilate called together the chief priests and elders of the people and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no reason for your charges against him. He has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore I will punish him and release him."

Then the leaders began to demand that Jesus be crucified. Again Pilate asked them, "Why? What has he done? I find no reason for the death penalty." But the leaders shouted loudly, "Crucify him! Crucify him! Let his blood be on us and our children!" So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He turned Jesus over to the soldiers who stripped him and flogged him. They put a purple robe on him and a crown of thorns on his head and mocked him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They struck him on the head and spit on him. Then they put his own clothes back on him and led him away to be crucified just as Jesus said would happen.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. Why did the religious leaders want to kill Jesus? (*They did not like what he was doing. They were jealous of him. And they thought he was blaspheming saying he was equal with God.*)
2. Who decided to betray Jesus? (*Judas, when Satan entered into him—that is, he listened to Satan and did what Satan wanted him to do.*)
3. Did Judas know how and where to capture Jesus quietly? (*Yes. He had been to the place before.*)
4. Could they find two witnesses against Jesus whose testimony was in agreement? (*No.*)
5. What did the high priest ask Jesus? (*Tell us plainly if you are the Messiah of God.*) What did Jesus answer? (*I am.*) What did the high priest say then? (*We need no more testimony, he has condemned himself.*)
6. What did the guards do to Jesus after the high priest condemned him to death? (*They struck Jesus, spit on him and said many insulting things to him.*)
7. What charge was brought against Jesus when he was taken to Pilate? (*That he was a king and was inciting the people to rebellion.*)
8. Did Pilate think Jesus was guilty of death? (*No. Only that he was a trouble maker.*)
9. Who was Pilate more afraid of—God or the people? (*He was afraid of the people and gave in to their demand that Jesus be put to death.*)
10. Was Jesus guilty or innocent? Was what he said to the high priest true? (*Yes. He was the Messiah of God. Remember on the night he was born the angel said, "Tonight is born the Messiah of God."*) Was what Jesus said to Pilate true? (*Yes. The prophet said that he would inherit the throne of his father David, and inherit an everlasting kingdom.*)
11. The prophet Isaiah said he would be crushed for our iniquities and the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, by his wounds we are healed. (*Isaiah 53:5*)
12. The requirement for the blood sacrifice in the days of Moses was that the lamb must be perfect, without blemish. Jesus was innocent. He was falsely accused and condemned to death. He would be the acceptable sacrifice for our sin.
13. The words of the prophets were coming true, just as Jesus had said would happen to the Messiah.

A Verse to Remember: “Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Genesis 22:8

or

“Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29

JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED AND SUFFERED FOR OUR SIN

Scriptures to Study: Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (Galatians 3:13; 1Peter 2:24); Matthew 27:1-10, 32-66; Mark 15:21-47; Luke 23:26-56; John 19:16-42

Talk About These Things:

1. **Recall** the story in the Garden of Eden when God said that the serpent (Satan) would bruise (wound) the heel of the offspring of woman. This is figurative prophecy that says that the serpent's power would be broken (his head crushed), but the offspring of woman would recover.
2. **Recall** the story of Cain and Abel when God said that Abel's blood cried out to him from the ground where Cain had spilled it. In today's story someone's blood would again cry out to God.
3. **Recall** the story of Abraham and the substitute sacrifice. In that story God provided the lamb for the sacrifice but spared Abraham's son. In today's story God provided the sacrifice but did not spare his own Son.
4. **Review** the prophecies in Isaiah 53—vv. 8-10.

Read From Bible: Luke 23:32-35

Tell the Story:**Jesus Was Crucified And Suffered For Our Sin**

That same morning Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus was condemned to die. He was seized with remorse and tried to return the thirty silver coins he had received for his betrayal to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," Judas said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" the religious leaders replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. (*Zechariah 11:12-13*)

A large number of people followed Jesus as he was led out to be crucified with two other men who were both criminals. When they came to the place called The Skull, there they removed Jesus' clothes and crucified him, nailing his hands and feet to the cross. The two criminals were also crucified one on his right and one on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." The soldiers divided up Jesus' clothes and cast lots for his seamless undergarment.

The people stood watching and the religious leaders even mocked him saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself." One of the criminals who hung there insulted Jesus and said, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and save us!" But the other criminal rebuked the first one, "Don't you fear God," he said, "since we are under the same sentence?

We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Jesus' mother Mary was standing there near the disciple named John. Jesus asked John to care for his mother as his own. It was now about midday and darkness came over the whole land until about mid afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. Finally Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Those standing near thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah. "Let's see if Elijah comes to help him," they said. Jesus had said, "I thirst," and was given a taste of vinegar on a sponge. Then he cried out, "It is finished!" and "Father, into your hands I give my spirit." Having said this, Jesus hung his head and died. At that moment the earth shook and the rocks split.

The centurion who was leader of the band of soldiers, when he heard Jesus' words and saw the earthquake and all that had happened, he was terrified and exclaimed, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" Since it was nearing sundown the religious leaders did not want the bodies to remain on the cross since the next day was a Sabbath. So they asked the soldiers to break the legs so each would die quickly. The soldiers broke the legs of each criminal. But when they came to Jesus they found that he was already dead. One of the soldiers took his spear and pierced Jesus' side bringing a flow of blood and water.

Later, a secret disciple of Jesus named Joseph, who himself was wealthy, went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus to bury it. Pilate granted his request, and along with another believer, they wrapped the dead body of Jesus in cloth and spices and placed it in a new tomb belonging to Joseph that had never been used. The followers of Jesus saw where he was buried. The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw where Jesus was buried and how his body was laid in it. They agreed to come back on the day after the Sabbath and anoint the body with spices. Then they sadly returned to their homes to prepare spices and perfumes.

The next day the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver (speaking of Jesus) said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone covering it and posting a guard outside.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. When Judas realized what he had done in betraying Jesus, what did he try to do? (*Return the money he was given.*) When the chief priests would not take back the money, what did Judas do? (*Threw it into the temple and went out and killed himself.*)
2. Who was Jesus crucified along with? (*Two criminals, one on each side, so that he would be identified with them as a criminal. See Isaiah 53:9*)
3. What did Jesus do for those who were mocking him and putting him to death? (*He prayed for them, asking God to forgive them.*)
4. What things were done to Jesus? (*He was nailed to a wooden cross. Psalm 22:16 His clothes were taken from him. Psalm 22:18 He was mocked and reviled. Psalm 22:6-8 He was shamed before his own mother and others watching, the religious leaders and the Roman soldiers.*)
5. One of the criminals reviled Jesus. What did the other one say to Jesus? (*Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*) What did Jesus say to him? (*Today you will be with me in paradise.*) What do you think that means?
6. Mention that the purpose of crucifixion was not to quickly kill a person but to do it slowly so that the person would suffer terrible thirst, pain, and would not be able to breathe. He might scream and cry out for days before finally dying. Part of the purpose was to make people fearful because it was such a horrible death.
7. Was Jesus concerned about his mother while he was dying? (*Yes. He gave his mother into the*

care of the trusted disciple John.)

8. About midday it became dark until mid afternoon. At the end of this time Jesus cried out. What did he say? (*My God, my God why have you forsaken me? See David's words in Psalm 22:1*) What do you think this might mean? **Read** *Isaiah 53:6, 12*. Remember that the lamb for the sacrifice had to be perfect without blemish, or in the case of Jesus, without sin. He was the substitute sacrifice. **Read** *2Corinthians 5:21; 1Peter 2:22-24*. For that time of darkness Jesus took our sin upon himself. The sinless Son of God now carried our sin. Fellowship with the Father was broken because of our sin. (*Isaiah 59:2; Habakkuk 1:13*) His blood was the blood sacrifice for our sin. God accepted the sacrifice. At last the fellowship was restored when Jesus said, "It is finished!" and "Father, into your hands I give my spirit." (*Psalm 31:5*)
9. The legs of the criminals were broken so they would die that day. But Jesus was already dead. **Read** *Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20*. According to prophecy none of the bones of the Passover lamb were to be broken. **See** *1Corinthians 5:7*.
10. When the soldiers saw that Jesus was already dead what did one of them do? (*He pierced the side of Jesus with his spear. Water and blood flowed out.*) Read *Zechariah 12:10*.
11. When Jesus died what happened in nature? (*There was an earthquake. Note: We have not mentioned the veil in the temple being torn as we have not introduced that theme of holiness and separation. It could be done in a subsequent story set or lessons on holiness.*)
12. What did the Roman centurion say when he witnessed these things happening? (*Surely, this was the Son of God.*)
13. Was Jesus really dead? This is the age-old question. The prophets said that the Messiah must suffer and die. Jesus said that he would suffer and die. The sacrifice had to die in order for the sacrifice to be effective. If Jesus had not died, then his sacrifice would not have been complete.
14. Who saw Jesus die? The Roman soldiers who were professional killers. The religious leaders were satisfied that he was dead. Jesus' mother saw him die. Many friends and others who followed him saw that he was dead. Another was not substituted in his place. His own mother and friends would have known if someone else was put in his place. The men who buried Jesus knew that he was dead when they prepared his body and buried it.
15. Who buried Jesus? (*Two of Jesus followers. One was Joseph who was wealthy and who had an unused tomb nearby. He gave his tomb to bury Jesus because it was already late in the day.*) Who saw where Jesus was buried? *Some of the women who had followed. They saw how the body was laid out inside the tomb and the large stone rolled to cover the entrance.*)
16. What were the religious leaders afraid of? (*They feared that Jesus' followers might come secretly and remove his body and then say that he had risen from the grave.*) What did they ask of Pilate? (*That the tomb be sealed and a guard posted so nothing could happen.*)

You have heard these stories from God's Word. You have seen how plainly the prophets said what was going to happen. You heard Jesus' own words about what would happen. God has protected these stories and these words so that you might hear them today. You have the same choice that people did in that day. You believe that it is true and happened just as the bible says, or you may choose not to believe. The disciple John when he wrote his account of the life of Jesus said that "...these things were written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." *John 20:31*

A Verse to Remember: "So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people..."
Hebrews 9:28a

Scriptures to Study: Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18

Talk About These Things:

1. Do you recall what Jesus said was going to happen to him? (*He would be betrayed, handed over to be put to death, then raised to life on the third day.*)
2. Did he tell his disciples what was going to happen only one time? (*No. Many times Jesus had said what was going to happen.*)
3. Did the disciples and followers of Jesus understand what he was talking about? (*No. Not until later did they understand. When he was crucified they thought that was the end of Jesus.*)
4. Had Jesus raised to life those who were dead? (*Yes. There are three stories recorded.*)

Read From Bible: John 20:1-2

Tell the Story:**Jesus Is Raised To Life Again, The End Of His Suffering**

When the Sabbath Day was over and the third day was dawning, some of the women brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus. Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled away the stone covering the tomb and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards posted at the tomb were terrified and became like dead men.

One of the women named Mary Magdalene saw the stone was removed from the tomb. She ran to tell the disciples, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" The other women when they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, entered but did not find the body of Jesus. While they were wondering about this, two angels in white clothing that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. The women were frightened and bowed down with their faces to the ground. The angels said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember what he told you while he was still with you? The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." Then they remembered Jesus' words. The women went to tell the disciples all these things. But the disciples did not believe the women, because their words seemed like foolishness.

But two of the disciples, Simon Peter and John got up and ran to the tomb. When they arrived John remained outside the open tomb. Simon Peter went in and saw the strips of cloth lying by themselves and even the cloth that had covered the face of Jesus neatly folded. Then John went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths and believed. Simon Peter went away wondering what had happened. Later Jesus appeared to him, too.

Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

"Woman," Jesus said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking Jesus was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you

have put him, and I will get him.”

Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out, “Teacher!”

Jesus said, “Don’t hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go to my brothers and tell them I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

Mary ran to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them Jesus had said these things to her.

When Jesus had first appeared to the disciples gathered in a room the one named Thomas was not present. The other disciples told him they had seen the Lord. But Thomas declared, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand in his side, I will not believe it.” A week later Jesus’ disciples were in the room again and Thomas was with them. Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

Thomas said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

While the women were still on their way to the tomb, and after the earthquake, the guards from the tomb went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders they devised a plan and gave the guards a large sum of money, telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ If this report gets to Pilate, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely told among the Jews to this very day.

After Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene, later he appeared to two disciples as they walked along, then Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples, to Simon Peter, and to more than 500 of the followers at one time. He had indeed risen from the dead as he said he would.

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Do you remember what had happened after Jesus died? Two of his followers had taken his body from the cross and wrapped it in burial cloths and laid it in a new tomb and closed the tomb with a large stone. The next day a guard was posted to be sure that his body was not taken away by the disciples.
2. Jesus was crucified on the day before the Sabbath and buried that same day before sundown. The next day was the Sabbath when work was forbidden and travel limited. At sundown it began the new day which was the first day of the week and the third day since Jesus died.
3. What had Jesus said would happen on the third day? (*He would rise again.*)
4. Did the disciples and followers of Jesus expect him to rise from the grave? (*No. They thought he was dead and gone.*)
5. When the women saw the open tomb and no body inside, did they understand? (*No. But they went to report it to the disciples.*) Did the disciples believe the women? (*No. They thought the women were speaking foolishness.*)
6. When the two disciples ran to the tomb what did they see? (*An empty tomb with the grave cloths still in place but Jesus was gone.*)
7. When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, did she recognize him? (*No.*) When Jesus spoke to her, calling her by name, did she recognize him then? (*Yes.*)
8. What did the disciple named Thomas say he must see in order to believe that Jesus was alive? (*The nail wounds in Jesus’ hands and the wound in his side.*)
9. When Jesus appeared and Thomas was present, what did Jesus ask him to do? (*Put his finger into the nail wounds and his hand into the wound in Jesus’ side.*) Did Thomas believe then? (*Yes.*)
10. What did Jesus say about those who believed, yet had never seen him? (*They were blessed.*)

11. Do you believe that Jesus is alive, having risen from the dead as he said? If not, what would it take for you to believe?

A Verse to Remember: “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Romans 4:25

Scriptures to Study: Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:13-48; 1Peter 1:10-11

Talk About These Things:

1. Can you think of a time when something happened that you had difficulty understanding? Perhaps you did not understand why it happened?
2. It is always good to have someone to explain things clearly to us. Today we have the written testimony of those who knew Jesus and lived at the time these things actually happened.
3. In this story it was Jesus himself who explained all things about himself to his friends. He went back to remind them of the same Scriptures that we have been looking at and learning from.

Read From Bible: 1Peter 1:10-11

Tell the Story:**Christ Had to Suffer All Things and Then Enter His Glory**

It was the same that day that God had raised Jesus from the dead. It happened that two of the followers of Jesus were walking along the road to a village called Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were sad because their teacher had died. As they walked they were talking about all that had happened in the last few days. As they were talking Jesus came up and joined them though they were kept from recognizing him.

“What are you discussing together as you walk along?” Jesus asked them. The two men stood still with their sad faces and one of them named Cleopas said, “Are you the only one in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened in these days?”

“What things?” Jesus asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The religious rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who would make our nation great again. Now it is the third day since this took place. Some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning and didn’t find the body of Jesus. They told us they saw a vision of angels who said Jesus was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it empty just as the women had said.”

After Cleopas finished speaking, Jesus said to them, “How foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And so beginning with Moses and all the prophets Jesus explained to the men what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

When they reached Emmaus it was nearly night. The two men urged Jesus to stay the night with them. When they sat down to eat, Jesus took some bread, gave thanks to God and broke the bread and gave it to the men. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus, but he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while Jesus talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?”

So they got up and hurried back to Jerusalem and found the other followers of Jesus. “It is true!” they said, “The Lord has risen from the dead and has appeared to us while we were on the road. We

recognized him when he broke the bread.”

While the two men were still talking to the others, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be to you.” The men were afraid for they thought to be seeing a ghost. Jesus said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your mind? Look at my hand and feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones.” When Jesus had said this he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still could not believe because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “So you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Then Jesus said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Then Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

He told them: “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. What were the followers of Jesus talking about as they walked along the road? (*The things that had happened in Jerusalem during the past several days.*)
2. Did they understand what had happened and why it had to happen to the Christ? (*No.*)
3. When Jesus joined them, and asked what they were talking about, what did they say to him? (*Are you the only one in Jerusalem who doesn’t know what has happened during these days?*)
4. What did they have to say about Jesus? (*He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The religious leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him. Then the women didn’t find his body in the tomb. They had seen a vision of angels who said Jesus was alive. Some of our men went to see for themselves and it was just as the women had said.*)
5. What did Jesus reply to the two men? (*How slow of heart you are to believe all the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?*)
6. Then what did Jesus do to help the two men understand what had happened? (*He began with Moses and all the Prophets and explained to them what the Scriptures said concerning himself.*)
7. When they reached the village and Jesus acted as though he were going farther, what did the men insist he do? (*Stay the night with them.*) When they sat down to eat and Jesus took the bread and gave thanks and broke it what happened? (*The eyes of the two men were opened—that is, they were able to recognize Jesus. Then he disappeared from their sight.*)
8. When this happened, what did the men say to one another? (*Did not our hearts burn within us while Jesus talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*)
9. So they hurried back to Jerusalem that same night to tell the others and said, “It is true! The Lord has risen! Then they told what had happened and how they recognized Jesus when he broke the bread.
10. What was the reaction of the disciples when Jesus appeared in their midst? (*They were afraid and thought he was a ghost.*)
11. What did Jesus do to put their fears to rest? (*He showed them his hands and feet, and asked for a piece of fish to eat before them.*)
12. Then what did Jesus remind the disciples about that he had told them? (*Everything must be fulfilled that is written in the Law of Moses (Taurat), the Prophets and the Psalms.*)
13. If you had been one of the two men on the road, would you have the same doubts?
14. If Jesus appeared and explained all things about himself to you, would you believe him?
15. In the stories you have heard many things from angels, the prophets, from Jesus and from people who knew Jesus. There is agreement in what they all said. Jesus was who he said he was. He is

the Messiah, the Promised One of God, who suffered and died to pay the penalty for our sin.

A Verse to Remember: “The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46-47

Scriptures to Study: Matthew 28: 16-20; Mark 16:15-20; Luke 24:46-53; Acts 1:3-11; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:9; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 8:1; 1Peter 3:22

Talk About These Things:

1. Jesus said he was going away to prepare a place for his followers. Later he would come and receive them to himself. Where do you think he was going? Remember: He said, “In my Father’s house are many rooms...”
2. Whose words did Jesus say he was speaking? **Read** John 8:26-28; 12:49-50; 17:7-8
3. Whose works did Jesus say he was doing? **Read** John 5:17, 19-20
4. Where Jesus say he had come from? **Read** John 6:33, 38

Read From Bible: Acts 1:4-5, 7-9

Tell the Story:**Jesus Returned To Heaven To Intercede For Our Suffering**

After Jesus was raised to life again according to the promise of God and the words that Jesus himself spoke, he continued to teach his followers for forty days before returning to the Father in heaven. Jesus reminded his followers that all had happened in fulfillment of what was written in the Law of Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets. The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations. (*Luke 24:46*)

On one occasion when he was eating with his disciples he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. The prophet John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea (the southern province) and Samaria (the neighboring province), and to the ends of the earth.” (*Acts 1:4-5, 7-8*)

Then Jesus led his followers out near the village of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven and a cloud hid him from their eyes. They were looking intently up into the sky as Jesus was going, when suddenly two angels dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” Then his followers worshiped and returned to Jerusalem with great joy praising God. (*Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:9-11*)

Later one of the disciples named Peter said that Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God (*Acts 2:33*) Again when Peter had been brought in for questioning by the religious leaders he said, “The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead—whom you had killed by hanging on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins...We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit.” (*Acts 5:30-32*)

Another prophet named Paul to whom Jesus had appeared in a vision said, “God raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms far above all rule and authority,

power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet..." (*Ephesians 1:20-22*) Paul also wrote that Christ Jesus is in heaven at the right hand of God where he lives to intercede for us. (*Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25*)

One day when the disciples Peter and John were going to the temple to pray there was a man crippled from birth. Every day he was carried there to beg alms from those going to pray. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at the man, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking the man by the right hand, Peter helped him to stand. Instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. (*Acts 3:1-9*)

Another time Peter had traveled to a city where a man named Aeneas lived. The man was paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your bed." Immediately Aeneas got up. Many who saw this happen believed in Jesus. (*Acts 9:32-35*)

These miracles were possible because Jesus had returned to the Father where he lives to intercede for sinners and to prepare a place for all who believe in him.

Let's Talk Some More:

1. What did Jesus command his followers to do after he left them? (*Remain in Jerusalem until God sent the Holy Spirit.*)
2. Where did Jesus say his followers would be witnesses of him? (*In the city of Jerusalem, in the surrounding provinces, and unto the ends of the earth.*)
3. Do you realize we are telling these stories and talking about them in fulfillment of what Jesus asked his followers to do? It is his desire that you hear these stories about him so you can believe in him, too.
4. Why do you think Jesus had to return to the Father? (*So the Father could send the Holy Spirit.*)
5. Who were witnesses of Jesus' return to heaven? (*His followers watched as he was taken up into heaven.*)
6. What did the angels tell the followers of Jesus? (*This same Jesus will come again one day just as you have seen him go up.*)
7. When Peter and John spoke to the crippled man, in whose name was the man healed? (*In the name of Jesus.*)
8. When Peter spoke to Aeneas, in whose name was Aeneas healed? (*In the name of Jesus.*)
9. Jesus returned to heaven to intercede for us in our suffering so we might be healed. But he returned to the Father for a greater purpose—he intercedes for us in our sin. First, he suffered and died in our place for our sin. Then he returned to the Father so that we might have forgiveness of sin and salvation through his name. The prophet Paul said to a man, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." (*Acts 16:31*) Peter said, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." (*Acts 4:12*) Again listen to what the prophet Paul said, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus...If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (*Galatians 3:26, 29*) And, "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts..." (*Galatians 4:4-5*)
10. You see, we become the sons of God when we believe in the Son of God. And as sons we will inherit forgiveness of sins and eternal life in the presence of the Father and the Son. Jesus told a man named Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that

whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (*John 3:16-18*)

A Verse to Remember: "If anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." 1John 2:1b-2

Scriptures to Study: Matthew 24:36; 25:1-13; 26:64; Romans 2:6-16; 1Thessalonians 4:13-17; Hebrews 9:27-28; Jude 14-15; Revelation 20:11-15

Talk About These Things:

1. Has anyone had the experience when a guest suddenly arrives? You knew he was coming but you didn't know exactly when?
2. Or what if you are a tenant farmer and suddenly the owner arrives and calls for an accounting of the crop or money earned from the crop?
3. What if someone promises to come but a long time has passed and still the person has not arrived? Would you continue to wait and expect the person?
4. What if the decision you make affected the rest of your time on earth and all of eternity in the next life? Would you want to make the right decision?

Read From Bible: Matthew 16:27; 2Thessalonians 1:8; Jude 15

Tell the Story:**The Coming Judgment And Suffering For Unbelievers**

When the high priest was questioning Jesus before condemning him to death, he asked Jesus: "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied, "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." When Jesus said this, the high priest accused him of blasphemy—making himself equal with God. And for this reason he wanted to put Jesus to death.

Jesus told many parables about his return and the coming judgment. In one story he told about ten virgins who were waiting for the bridegroom to come for the wedding feast. Five had brought extra oil and five did not. When the bridegroom was delayed in coming, the five without extra oil, when they trimmed their lamps, were unprepared to go in to the feast and were shut out. (*Matthew 25:1-13*)

In another story Jesus told about a man who had sowed wheat in his field. During the night an enemy came and sowed bad seed among the good. When the workers discovered this, they asked the master what to do, should we pull up the bad weeds? "No," he said, "Let them both grow until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn." (*Matthew 13:24-30*) Then Jesus said, "The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. The Son of man will send out his angels and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fire where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth." (*Matthew 13:37-42*)

Jesus said, "You must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (*Luke 12:40*) "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, not

the Son, but only the Father.” (*Matthew 24:36*) “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied: ‘See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.’” (*Jude 14-15*) “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory...and he will reward each person according to what he has done.” (*Matthew 16:27*) “All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” (*Matthew 25:32*) “He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.” (*2Thessalonians 1:8*) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” (*2Corinthians 5:10*) “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” (*Revelation 20:12-13, 15*)

In the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man did not believe the words of Moses and the Prophets while in this life. Then he died and found himself already in fire and torment awaiting the day of final judgment and eternal punishment. We have been warned, we are without excuse.

Let’s Talk Some More:

How can we escape this terrible punishment for sin?

The Bible says “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (*Romans 3:23*)
and the wages of sin is death. (*Romans 6:23*)

But you may say, I am not a sinner.

The Bible says: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us...
If we claim we have not sinned, we make him (God) out to be a liar and his word is not in us.”
(*1John 1:8, 10*)

“Salvation then does not depend on man’s desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.” (*Rom 9:16*)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ...In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. (*Ephesians 1:3, 7*)

“As for you, you were dead in your transgression and sins in which you used to live when you followed the ways of the world...But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so no one can boast.” (*Ephesians 2:1-2, 4-5, 8-9*)

Here’s the problem:

We have inherited the sinful, disobedient nature of our father Adam.

“Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men. (*Romans 5:12*)

We have inherited the seed of sin from him.

We are sinners by our birth.

We are also sinners by choice. (*Isaiah 53:6*)

We choose to disobey God.

The Bible says: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of Breaking all of it. (*James 2:10*)

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. (*Romans 3:20*)

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. (*Galatians 3:24*)

Some who do not know the righteousness that comes from God, have sought to establish their own by attempting to keep the law, and not submitting to God’s righteousness. (*Romans 10:3*)

If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing! (*Galatians 2:21*)

So we are under God’s judgment because of our sin.

Unless God helps us, when we die, we go to eternal punishment in hell, the place prepared for the Devil and his demons. (*Romans 6:23*)

But God is love, (*1John 4:8*) and loving toward all he has made. (*1John 4:9-10*)

He is patient not wanting any to perish. (*2Peter 3:9*)

So just as God provided a way for Noah and his family to escape the destruction upon that wicked world, God has provided a way to escape the coming destruction.

He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering (*Romans 8:3*)

To suffer in our place for our sin. (*Romans 5:6*)

His blood was shed as a sacrifice pleasing to God.

The price was paid.

But we must claim it.

We are sinners.

God has provided a way to cleanse us and forgive us.

We confess our sin and ask God to forgive our sin.

We must confess our faith in Jesus Christ, God’s sacrifice for sin.

“If we confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” (*Romans 10:9*)

All of these stories have been to remind you that God is sovereign or ruler over man because he created us.

He is a holy God and we have broken his holy law.

Again and again even the prophets fell into sin—

Moses disobeyed God and was not allowed to enter the Promised Land,

David sinned with Bathsheba and brought terrible judgment on his family.

But God had a plan to send his own Son, born without the sinful seed of our father Adam, born of flesh through woman in our likeness,

to live a life without sin (remember, he only did what he saw his Father in heaven doing),

to be obedient even unto death—the sinless one suffering and dying for the sinner.

And now you see that all this leads to only one conclusion:

We can have eternal life without punishment for sin by faith in Jesus, or we can deny Jesus and face him as judge of sin and be certain to have an eternity in torment and suffering as punishment for our sin.

Submit to Jesus Christ as Savior or face Jesus Christ as judge and suffer for all eternity.

It's your choice.

A Verse to Remember: “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:26

Scriptures to Study: Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 11:28-30; Luke 7:36-50

Talk About These Things:

1. Perhaps you are wondering: If I believe in Jesus, will I continue to suffer in this life?
2. Are you wondering if Jesus can help when there is need and suffering?
3. Are you searching for peace—peace in your heart, peace in your home, or peace among your neighbors?

Read From Bible: Matthew 11:28-30

Tell the Story:

Come Unto Me All Who Are Heavy Laden And I Will Give Rest

The prophet Isaiah said that the Messiah of God would take up our infirmities and carry our sorrows. We saw in the stories of Jesus that many came to Jesus seeking healing of diseases, restoring crippled bodies, release from oppression by evil spirits, peace, and even a blessing for the children.

One of the Pharisees named Simon had invited Jesus to have a meal. So Jesus went to the man's house and was eating with him and his friends. By and by a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town came into the house carrying a jar of perfume. As she stood behind Jesus at his feet she was weeping and began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she knelt down and began to wipe Jesus' feet with her hair, she kissed his feet and poured perfume on them. The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and thought to himself, "If Jesus were a prophet, he would know who is touching him, what kind of a woman she is—she is a sinner."

Jesus knew what Simon was thinking so he said to him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." Then Jesus told about two men who had each borrowed money from a moneylender, one a very large amount and the other a small amount. When it was time to repay the money neither man could repay the amount. So the moneylender forgave both debts. Then Jesus asked Simon, "Which of the two men loved the moneylender more?" Simon said, "The one who had the bigger debt cancelled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus replied.

Then Jesus reminded Simon that, when he came into the house, Simon did not give him any water to wash his feet, but the woman had washed Jesus' feet with her tears. There was no kiss of greeting for Jesus but the woman had not stopped kissing Jesus' feet. And there was no fragrant oil to anoint Jesus' head, but the woman had poured perfume on his feet. So Jesus said to Simon, "Her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much." Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you, go in peace." The woman had come to Jesus with many troubles from her past. He sent her away with a blessing for peace and her sins forgiven.

Jesus said, "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

One day when Jesus was visiting in the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus he was teaching and Mary was sitting at his feet listening. Martha was in the kitchen preparing food for her guests.

She was very distracted and disturbed because her sister Mary was not helping her. Finally she came to Jesus and said, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” Tenderly Jesus replied, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Again Jesus reminded his listeners that we must be forgiving and peaceful. “If you are offering a gift to God at the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother, then come and offer your gift.” (*Matthew 5:23-24*)

As followers of Jesus you are to cast all your anxiety upon him because he cares for you. (*1Peter 5:7*) For it says do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which exceeds all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (*Philippians 4:6-7*)

Your heavenly Father knows all your needs. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all your needs will be given as well. (*Matthew 6:32-33*)

One of the blessings of having your sins forgiven is a right relationship with God your heavenly Father. One of the privileges of being a son of God is fellowship with him in prayer, praising him in worship, sharing your needs, and praying for others. We are to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus.

Jesus told his disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (*John 14:27*) For Jesus himself is our peace. (*Ephesians 2:14*)

Let’s Talk Some More:

1. Will we continue to suffer while in this world? Yes, suffering will come. But when it does, we are to share it with Jesus, asking for his help.
2. We need to be sure that we haven’t done anything which has caused another person to suffer. If we have, we are to go and make it right with that person and ask their forgiveness.
3. We are to be men and women of peace, seeking the peace that Jesus gives, and in turn being peace to others.
4. As you grow in your faith in Jesus you will learn to pray to share all your cares and anxieties with him. He will strengthen you and through his grace comfort you.
5. A time is coming in the next life when sorrowing and suffering are no more. **Read Revelation 21:3-4**

A Verse to Remember: “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” *1Peter 5:7*

BRINGING CLOSURE TO THE EVANGELISM TRACK

Early Responders—

There is always the possibility of some listeners being ready to believe in Jesus even before you get to the end of the lessons. If so, take them aside privately, if you can, and question them to see if they understand who Jesus was and why God sent him, the problem of our broken relationship with God because of sin, our helplessness to restore that relationship through anything we might do, and how Jesus was God's acceptable sacrifice for our sin. By confessing our sin and asking God's forgiveness, and believing in Jesus as the One sent from God who suffered and died and rose again, we can have salvation.

Nearing Closure to the Evangelism Track—

Begin looking for signs of responsiveness. It may be in growing interest in the stories of Jesus, it may surface in the discussion time following the stories. This is a time of intense prayer for the Spirit to overcome any work of Satan and any hindrance that may be giving confusion or holding the listeners back from a growing awareness of their need to find salvation in Christ.

Bringing Closure to the Invitation to Believe—

Generally people in this part of the world, and especially rural people, do not respond well to formula presentations of salvation, or propositional types of presentations. They may respond better to a story and identify with persons in the story—i.e., Zacchaeus, the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, or the man born blind in John 9. Even the story of the Prodigal Son can have effectiveness by presenting a drama which they can identify with.

In these lessons there is the continuing theme of suffering, first due to sin and disobedience and then, the work of Jesus to end suffering from sin, disease, and demons. For many of the target people the promise of suffering ending at some future time in heaven is beyond their comprehension—they live in the here and now. And tomorrow is a long way off. So you may want to give more emphasis to forgiveness of sin right now with the prospect of peace and blessing coming from a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

You will need to pray, asking for wisdom in how best to present closure to the evangelism story, what kind of an invitation will speak to the listeners and one that they can culturally respond to. In some situations you may not be able to ask for a visible response to the presentation of the gospel. If so, you may want to ask the listeners to make the decision in their hearts and ask God to help them be bold to share it at the right time.

Post Closure Dialog and Late Responders—

There are often late responders who, for whatever reason, were prevented from making a decision for Christ at the time of closure invitation. So you need to leave the door open for these people when they are finally able to resolve in their heart what is right to do. Also be prepared to go back and repeat selected story lessons as a way of strengthening these brothers and sisters who are struggling with the problem of sin and the dilemma of who Jesus is confused by the teaching from their prevailing religion.

The Need for Immediate and Continuing Affirmation—

Satan will be hard at work trying to confuse listeners and hinder their being able to see the light of the gospel. For those who do make a decision for Christ, they will need immediate affirmation that they have made the right decision. There are several ways to do this. One is to go back over selected stories that deal with sin and forgiveness, and the work of Jesus. Another is to take a different tack of involving the believers in worship prayer, prayer for ministry to those in need, and for intercession prayer for others needing to believe in Jesus. Memory verses and study of one of the Epistles like Ephesians may help. They will have questions and you may be able to guide them to Scripture verses which give assurance.

The Problem of Baptism of Believers—

The best way to approach the matter of baptism is through the baptism stories in Acts so that at some point someone should ask, “Why haven’t we been baptized like these people?” It is also helpful to give a teaching about the meaning of the symbolism of baptism as a picture of the washing away of sins, death and burial of the old person and rising in newness of life in Christ, obedience to Christ’s command, and as a testimony of one’s faith in Christ and identification with him publicly. It often is best to wait until several can be baptized at the same time for mutual strengthening. There is also the possibility of a closeted baptism which is done in a place where hostility can be controlled.

Beginning Worship and Developing a Community of Faith—

This is the proverbial place where the water hits the wheel, so to speak. This is actually the major objective beyond evangelizing individuals. For the gospel to take root, a church must be planted and it must grow and be a reproducing church, contributing to the spread of the kingdom among a people. The Acts stories help to give a model of what believers did in that day after Jesus returned to heaven. There will be a tension developed between the former way of prayer, ritual and worship and meeting the new expectation in Christ.

For Muslim background believers there are several options:

1. For them to retain as much of their former practice as does not run counter to New Testament doctrine and practice. And then trust the Holy Spirit to lead them fully into truth and leaving the old way behind. The major consideration is avoiding any hint of needing to become “Westernized” or to let “Christian culture” dictate their worship, especially if it is not satisfying spiritually to them. There is strong possibility of syncretism in time unless checked, as believers will blur the difference in meaning as they return to the old beliefs, or continue to practice them out of habit without understanding the new relationship to God in Christ. Several contextual models exist differing in degree of contextualization.
2. For them to abandon all their “Muslim forms” and follow a new form introduced by the evangelist which will most likely reflect his/her own culture and practice. Unfortunately, this often means having to become Westernized or Christianized as they would see it. This contributes to the foreignness of New Testament faith. Sometimes members of the group will be the ones to lead in this direction as they may have some experience in a local Christian church. Syncretism is not a problem here but it may mean that for a generation at least, there is strangeness in the new worship.
- 3.

4. The third model is either the “best of both worlds” or a “transformational model”. In the best of both worlds what is not unscriptural can be kept as form and practice in worship and community and ministry. And certain things may be borrowed from typical Christian practice to fill in the gaps, especially those dictated by Scripture.

The transformational model seeks to go a step further and give new meaning to old forms just as baptism was given meaning by John the Baptist, Jesus and his followers, and the communion meal gave new meaning to the Passover meal. Ritual washing before prayer and worship and certain prayer ritual and forms may be transformed to provide a satisfying worship.

We don't want the first churches planted to be hindrances to any future church plants by elements of foreignness, not being spiritually satisfying models or being syncretistic.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD

1. God is one God; the heavenly Father always works in harmony with the Word and the Spirit.
2. God is righteous and all his work is good
3. God is all-seeing and all-knowing.
He sees and knows all that we say and do and even the thoughts of our heart whether they be good or evil.
4. God is all-powerful. Nothing is impossible for God to do.
5. God is merciful and loving toward all his creation, wanting all people to turn from their sin, seek His forgiveness and to sin no more..
6. God hates all sin, judges sin, and punishes the sinner.
7. God has promised to forgive our sin if we turn from it, confess it and seek His mercy.
God is faithful to keep his promises, even if a long time passes.

SCRIPTURAL ISSUES RELATED TO SALVATION

1. God is sovereign over all creation. All creation is accountable to him. (2Chronicles 20:6; Romans 1:18-20)
2. Man was created in the image of God, without sin. (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1)
3. The first man Adam chose to disobey God, breaking the relationship with God. (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12, 17)
4. All men choose to disobey God because the sinful nature is passed from Father to children, generation to generation. (2Chronicles 6:36; Romans 5:15, 18)
5. Man suffers because of his disobedience in this life and will suffer eternally in the life to come. (Psalm 107:17; Romans 6:23; Hebrew 2:2)
6. Man is helpless to save himself from God's wrath, or to appease God's wrath. (Luke 13:3; Revelation 6:16)
7. When man repents of his sin, confesses it, and seeks forgiveness God's way, God forgives him. (2Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 5:7; Luke 15:11-24; 1John 1:9)
8. Man must seek lasting forgiveness and salvation from God by believing in the Promised One God has sent, and accepting what the Promised One has done in man's behalf. (John 6:40; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Romans 10:9; 1John 5:12)
9. There is no cost, salvation through forgiveness is free to the sinner, only it must be accepted. The price was paid by God in the suffering and death of his Son in our place for our sin. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1John 4:10)
10. Because of sin all people are under God's judgment and are condemned to die—be eternally punished and separated from God's love and blessing. (John 3:18; Acts 3:23; 6:23; 17:30)
11. We must decide in this life. At death our fate is sealed—unbelievers to an eternal punishment, believers to eternal blessing in the presence of God and the Savior. To do nothing is to die and spend an eternity in a hell prepared for unbelieving sinners whose sins have not been forgiven. There is no place where we might work off our penalty of sin after death. There is no one to help us after death if we have not believed in Christ in this life. (Luke 16:29; Hebrews 9:27;)
12. Our salvation is secure in Christ. (John 6:37-39)

PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH

Prophecies		Fulfillment
Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.	Would be the "Offspring of a woman"	Gal 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. (Luk 2:7; Rev 12:5)
Gen 18:18 Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. (Gen 12:3; 22:18)	Promised offspring of Abraham	Act 3:25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, "through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed." (Mat 1:1; Luk 3:34)
Gen 17:19 Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.	Promised offspring of Isaac	Mat 1:2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers." (Luk 3:34)
Num 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel, He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of the sons of Sheth. (Gen 28:14)	Promised offspring of Jacob	Luk 3:34 ...the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor. (Mat 1:2)
Gen 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of nations is his.	Will descend from tribe of Judah	Luk 3:33 ...the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah. (Mat 1:2-3)
Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. (Isa 11:1-5; 2Sa 7:13; Jer 23:5;)	Heir to the throne of David	Mat 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Mat 1:6) Luk 1:32-33 ..The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."
Mic 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, our of you will come for me one who will be the ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.	Place of birth	Mat 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem. (Luk 2:4-7)
Dan 9:25 Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven "sevens" and sixty-two "sevens". It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.	Time of birth	Luk 2:1-2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (Luk 2:3-7)
Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and you will call him Immanuel.	Born of a virgin	Mat 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. (Luk 1:26-35)
Jer 31:15 This is what the Lord says, "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.	Slaughter of infants	Mat 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. (Mat 2:17-18)
Hos 11:1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.	Escape into Egypt	Mat 2:14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt. (Mat 2:15)
Isa 9:1-2 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom	Ministry in	Mat 4:12-16 When Jesus heard that John had

for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the gentiles, by way of the sea, along the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.	Galilee	been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali—to fulfill what was said by the prophet Isaiah: Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people living in darkness have seen a great light, on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.
Deu 18:15 The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.	A Prophet, Like Moses	Jhn 6:14 After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." (Jhn 1:45; Act 3:19-26)
Psa 110:4 The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." (Zec 6:12-13)	A Priest, like Melchizedek	Heb 6:20 Where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (Heb 5:5-6; 7:15-17)
Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Psa 2:2)	Rejected by Jews	Jhn 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. (Jhn 5:43; Luk 4:29; 17:25; 23:18)
Isa 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Psa 45:7; Isa 11:3-4)	Characteristics	Luk 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luk 4:18)
Zec 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Isa 62:11)	His triumphal entry	Jhn 12:13-14 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written. (Mat 21:1-11; Jhn 12:12)
Psa 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trust, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.	Betrayed by a friend	Mrk 14:10 Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. (Mat 26:14-16; Mrk 14:43-45)
Zec 11:12 I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it" So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. (Zec 11:13)	Sold for 30 pieces of silver	Mat 26:15 And asked, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" So they counted for him thirty silver coins. (Mat 27:3-10)
Zec 11:13 And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.	Money returned for a potter's field	Mat 27:6-7 The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. (Mat 27:3-5, 8-10)
Psa 109:7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty, and may his prayers condemn him. May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.	Judas Commits Suicide After Betraying Jesus	Mat 27:3-5 When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priest and the elders...So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself."
Psa 27:12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. (Psa 35:11)	False witnesses accuse him	Mat 26:60-61 But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, "this fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"
Isa 53:5 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is	Silent when accused	Mat 26:62-63 Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are

silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Psa 38:13-14)		bringing against you? But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." (Mat 27:12-14)
Isa 50:6 So I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.	Struck, mocked and spit upon	Mrk 14:65 Then some began to spit at him, they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him. (Mrk 15:17; Jhn 19:1-3; 18:22)
Psa 69:4 Those who hate without reason outnumber the hairs of my head; many are my enemies without cause, those who seek to destroy me. I am forced to restore what I did not steal. (Psa 109:3-5)	Hated without cause	Jhn 15:23-25 He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: "They hated me without reason."
Isa 53:4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. (Isa 53:6, 12)	Suffered vicariously for our sins	Mat 8:16-17 When evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took up our infirmities and carried out diseases." (Rom 4:25; 1Co 15:3)
Isa 53:12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.	Crucified with sinners	Mat 27:38 Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. (Mrk 15:27-28; Luk 23:33)
Psa 22:16 Dogs have surrounded me, a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. (Zec 12:10)	Hands and feet pierced	Jhn 20:27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." (Jhn 19:37; 20:25-26)
Psa 22:6-8 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me, they hurl insults, shaking their heads; "He trusts in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."	Mocked and Insulted	Mat 27:39-40 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God!" (Mat 27:41-44; Mrk 15:29-32)
Psa 69:21 They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst.	Given gall and vinegar	Jhn 19:29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. (Mat 27:34, 48)
Psa 22:8 He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.	Hears prophetic words repeated in mockery	Mat 27:43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, "I am the Son of God."
Psa 109:4 In return for my friendship they accuse me, but I am a man of prayer. (Isa 53:12)	Prays for his enemies	Luk 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.
Zec 12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.	His side to be pierced	Jhn 19:34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

Psa 22:18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.	Soldiers cast lots for his clothes	Mrk 15:24 And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. (Jhn 19:24)
Psa 34:20 He protects all his bones, not one of them will be broken. (Exo 12:46)	Not a bone to be broken	Jhn 19:33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.
Isa 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.	To be buried with the rich	Mat 27:57-60 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered it should be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.
Psa 16:10 Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. (Mat 16:21)	His resurrection	Mat 28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. (Luk 24:36-48)
Psa 68:18 When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious—that you, O Lord God; might dwell there. (Eph 4:8)	His ascension	Luk 24:50-51 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. (Act 1:9)

