

Mr. Wise told me when I first became a follower of Christ. He gave me a list of stories from the Bible to help people understand the gospel.” [This list of stories appears in Section IV.]

Learner’s brother Helper says, “I want to follow Jesus. I can repent of my sins because God’s Holy Spirit helps me do it.” He takes his guitar and starts to compose a new song about Christ’s wonderful forgiveness.”

“Wonderful!” Learner exclaims, “I rejoice that my friends and relatives are coming to Jesus!” A few days later the group meets in Learner’s house and Mr. Wise announces, “I will not be able to come and teach you much longer. I am leaving Learner in charge. He has grown in Christ and now meets the biblical requirements for a shepherding elder. I am laying hands on him to commission him to shepherd this flock in my absence.”

“You cannot leave us!” Sara cries.

“I must. Learner, we will call you a ‘provisional elder’ until you can do these things without my constant supervision. You will baptize Helper and the others.”

Mr. Foolish objects, “It is too soon! My cousin read in the Bible where it says not to lay hands on a new leader suddenly!”

Learner explains, “What did the apostle Paul mean by the word ‘suddenly?’ We look at his example to know. I am doing it no faster than the apostle Paul did under the same circumstances, for new congregations without experienced leaders of any kind, and under persecution, in Galatia, in Acts 14. I follow his example. Learner, you are to baptize the people to whom you took Christ.”

Practical Work

- Help your congregation to know the things we are to tell others about, in Luke 24:46-47.
- Plan what you will do to help your relatives, friends and neighbours to repent and believe in Christ.
- Help the new believers to understand that when they turn to God, they receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Command of Christ #1

Repent, Believe, and Receive the Holy Spirit (Salvation)

The next week, several new believers and others who are seeking God gather in Learner’s small house. They are seated in a circle so they can see each other and have better conversation. Mr. Wise teaches them Jesus’ command to repent, believe and receive the Holy Spirit. He reads about the different aspects of this command in Mark 1:15, John 3:16, and John 20:22.

Mr. Foolish arrives at the meeting and announces, “I am a Christian now. I think it is the better way to live.”

“I will talk with you later about that,” Mr. Wise says. “Now, let us all make plans to reach more people for Christ. I did not come to preach. We are all going to talk to each other about what God wants us to do. I want all of you to talk about it. Please.”

Learner says, “I have friends along the road north of here. I want to tell them about Jesus.”

Mr. Foolish says, “I hope we can avoid offending those people, because they sometimes buy my little statues. We must not always be telling them they are sinners. They will get angry.”

“I disagree,” Mr. Wise says. “Sometimes the most loving thing we can do for people is to warn them that they must repent of their sins. We must not fear that we will offend them. Let me tell you about John the Baptist’s Fearless Preaching.



Exercise

Please find in Matthew 3:4-10 the answer to what Mr. Wise asks:

- What kind of people did John the Baptist baptize—people who were good enough to deserve it, or bad enough to need it?

Sara says, “Since you asked all of us to talk, I will say what I have discovered. We who know that we have had many sins in our lives appreciate Jesus’ forgiveness more than people who think they are really good.

Mr. Foolish starts to reply but Learner asks, “What do we tell the people first about God?”

Mr. Wise says, “Let me tell you The Most Important Things in the Gospel Message.”

Exercise

Please find in Luke 24:36-53 these important things:

- What two great events in Jesus’ life history do we tell to others?
- What must a sinner do, according to this passage, to receive forgiveness of sins?
- Where does our power come from, to tell others about Jesus?

Mr. Wise explains to the group in Learner’s house. “When we speak to others about Jesus, we explain that He is the ‘Sent One’ of God, the Christ, God’s anointed one. What else do we tell them?”

One of the new believers answers shyly, “Learner told me to tell them about His death and resurrection.”

“Yes! And we call them to repentance. We ask them not just to make a mental decision, but to act. They are to repent and confirm it by baptism.”

Learner adds to the discussion, “Then we help the new believers to use God’s power that the Holy Spirit gives us to tell others about Jesus.”

Mr. Foolish interrupts, “We do not need to make people feel bad about their sins. That offends them. That is why the authorities do not want Mr. Wise to live here. He offends them. People only need to accept the fact that God loves them! That is enough.”

Several start to argue about this. Mr. Wise says, “Listen, please. People need to do more than accept a message. Let me tell you How Peter Presented Jesus to the Jewish People.”

Exercise

Please find in Acts 2:22-38:

- What did Peter say about Jesus?
- What did Peter tell people to do to be saved?

The group, sitting in a circle in Learner’s house, discuss this for several minutes, then ask Mr. Wise if they are correct in what they have said. He replies, “Yes. You have learned well. Let us summarize it. The Apostle Peter preached the important truths of the Good News. Three thousand people responded with repentance, with the help of the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts. They were baptized the same day into the church. We must not count new believers until they are added to the church by baptism, or we cause confusion. Now, what were the truths that the apostles taught those who sought God?”

A man answers, “Jesus is the Saviour that God approved through miracles as the Lord and Messiah.”

Sara says, “His death brings us forgiveness.”

Another adds, “His resurrection brings us victory over death and a new life through God’s Holy Spirit.”

Still another replies, “Our response is repentance, faith in Jesus, baptism and entry into the church.”

Learner affirms, “I’m going to follow the example of the Apostle Peter and tell my relatives the same powerful story of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. I will use the stories that