

### Q3 L03 - Seeing People Through Jesus Eyes - 2020-07-18

Doug Batchelor: Hello, friends, Pastor Doug Batchelor here. Want to welcome you to our "Sabbath School Study Hour." And I want to welcome friends who are watching right now on AFTV, on Facebook, The Amazing Facts Facebook. We're even streaming on the Granite Bay website, on YouTube. We're doing all we can to get the message out. And you can see we're in a little different location than our regular church. We've been broadcasting the last few months since the pandemic hit from the Amazing Facts worship room. And after I'm done with the lesson here, then we're driving over to our church service, where we're meeting right now, we'll be streaming there as well from the Granite Bay Bayside Adventure Church. And so, it's just been very interesting times we're living in.

I'm so thankful we can come together, study God's Word, and talk about witnessing. And this is a very important subject, "Making Friends For God." Because right now, people are very open to spiritual things with all the unrest and the turmoil in the world. And it's a great time to study how do we share our faith. But before we get delving into our lesson, let's go ahead and begin with a word of prayer. Loving Father, we are thankful for the good news, and the gospel, and just the power of the truth to transform lives. I pray that You be with us now as we study the science of salvation, and talking about how to share our faith and to do things in a winsome way to try to attract people to Christ. And so, bless in Jesus' name, amen.

Now, first thing I'd like to mention is our lesson today is going to be "Seeing People Through Jesus' Eyes." We want to see people through the eyes of Christ, and it's lesson number three. We have an offer, we think it'll go well with that, and this is a free book that I wrote. I wrote this a few years ago as a sharing book, and they printed extra copies because it was very popular. It's really a book on faith, and it's called "Who Do You Think You Are?" And it's full of stories and illustrations on faith and how you can reach people. If you'd like to know more about this or you like a free copy, just simply call the number, 866-788-3966. That's 866-STUDY-MORE. And if you call and ask for offer number 787, if you want, you can also get this book, you can have it texted to you. And simply text "SH143" to 40544. And if we're mailing it, that's only for the US and its territories.

All right, now into our lesson, the lesson is lesson number three, and it's dealing with making friends for God. We have a memory verse, and the memory verse is from Matthew chapter 4, verse 19. "And Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.'" Now, He not only said this at one time to the four fishing brothers, namely Peter and Andrew, James and John, and they left their nets and they followed Him. But later on, He said it more specifically, and this is Luke chapter 5, to Peter. Peter said, "Lord, depart from me, I am a sinful man." Jesus said, "Don't fear, follow Me and I will make you a fisher of men."

And this is just a wonderful truth because I don't know for those listening out there how much you know about fishing, but it's a very interesting industry. I read an amazing fact not too long ago, it was January 5, 2019, the owner of a Tokyo-based sushi restaurant chain paid \$3.1 million for one fish, \$3.1 million for one fish, a fish they were going to carve up and eat. It was a 612 pound blue fin tuna, and that comes to about \$5,000 per pound. And I guess fish is pretty expensive over there at certain seasons. But how much more is a man worth than a goat, or a sheep, or a dove, or a fish? And Jesus said to Peter, James, John, and Andrew, "You're excited about catching a net full of fish. I will make you fishers of men."

Now, there are some things that we can learn from fishing that tell us a little bit about evangelism. For one thing, fishing is an addiction. Do you know anybody that's a fishaholic? I've got some friends that they just love fishing. Maybe they did it with their dads growing up and they just--they can't stop themselves. And whenever they get a chance, they take their fishing boat and they take their fishing gear, and they go out to the lake, and they love spending the weekend fishing. I heard about a barbershop that had a sign on the door, it said, "Closed next Monday due to the weather." And a friend said, "Well, how do you know what the weather's going to be next Monday?" He said, "Well, if it's raining, I'm going fishing. If it's sunny, I'm going fishing. It all depends on the weather." In other words, he was going fishing no matter what.

I remember hearing a funny story about a game warden that was running his patrol, patrolling the lakes and the mountains. And it was not fishing season, and so he was very surprised when he heard this loud explosion. And he went towards the sound and he heard the explosion again. And pretty soon, it led him out towards a lake. So, he hears this explosion again, and he goes off and he looks on the edge of the lake and he sees a guy sitting out there in a boat. And he's lighting sticks of dynamite, and he's tossing the sticks of dynamite off in the water. And it goes boom, and these fish float up to the surface, he scoops up the fish, and he puts them in his boat. Well, the game warden is outraged. Not only is it not fishing season, but that's totally illegal, you can't fish like that. So, he jumps in a little canoe that happened to be there on the shore, he paddles out to the fellow, and he says, "Who do you think you are? You can't do that, this is illegal. This is not fishing season." And the man doesn't say anything, he very calmly lights another stick of dynamite, and he tosses it in the boat of the game warden. He says, "Do you want to talk or do you want to fish?"

So, that kind of illustrates that when people are determined to fish, you can't stop them. If every Christian felt that strongly about soul winning, that it's something--it's our greatest pleasure, it's our pastime, our lives are built around it. I've got a friend that he's a contractor. But the only reason he's a building contractor is to subsidize his fishing addiction. That whenever he has a chance, he wants to go out fishing.

Now, you know, there's some things that you can learn about soul winning from fishing. And first of all, I'm just going to go through some high points. If you're going to catch fish, you've got to go to where the fish are. Many times I've been out in the ocean, I've just marveled. My dad used to have three boats in our backyard growing up. And he liked to take us out fishing. That was deep sea fishing, but we would also fish right off the dock in the bay there in Miami, in Biscayne Bay. And you can't catch a fish if you're on dry land, you've got to go to where the fish are. Now, that doesn't mean you get in the water with the fish. You could be caught like Jonah. But Christians need to--like Jesus, we need to go and reach out to sinners and try to reach them. You can't wait for them all to come to the church.

Something else about fishing, you have to be patient. Fishermen do not give up easy. They cast out their line, and if only once out of every ten times of going out and trolling, and casting out their bait, and hooking their line, if they only catch a fish once out of every ten times, they consider themselves successful fishermen. And so, we give up so easy. We knock on a door, we get turned away, knock on a door, get turned away. Fishermen don't get discouraged. Someone said, "A bad day fishing is better than a good day at the office." And when you love it, you're excited to be doing it, even if you don't catch something every time. So, you have to be patient.

You need to be patient in working with people. If a fisherman catches a fish, he tries to pull it in too quick, you pull the hook out or you break the line. You got to reel them in slowly. And when you're working with souls, it takes patience. Maybe this is why Jesus said it's like--fishing is soul winning.

Fish are attracted to light. I remember going fishing with a friend--now, I'm a vegetarian, but I like to go fishing. I just don't eat the fish. But I remember going fishing with a friend in Hawaii, and we went fishing all night. And that was some of the best fishing because he docked his boat off the south point of the big island of Hawaii, it's all black on the water, and it's black out in the hills. And we're there floating in the ocean, you can see the land not far away. And he dropped a waterproof 12-volt bulb off the back of the boat into the water, and he actually lowered it down about 15 feet or so. And first we saw nothing, but gradually we saw 1, and then 2, and then 10, and then 50, and pretty soon there were thousands of fish that were swarming around our light. And we had to lower our lines. We had these fishing lines that had three or four hooks on one line. And we would drop them in and we'd reel them in, we'd catch two or three fish every time we dropped the line in because they are attracted to light. In our excitement, we kicked the jumper cables that hooked the lightbulb to the battery, the light went off. In just a matter of a few seconds, all the fish were gone. The Bible says, "Let your light shine."

Something else about fish, fish like good food. Fish like fresh bait. You don't give them old stale bait, you don't give them dead bait. If you have a live worm or cricket you can put it on the hook, and it kicks and

wiggles, a lot more chance you're going to catch the fish. You know one of the best ways to catch a fish is with a live fish. I remember one time, I was out in the ocean with my friend Steve and on his fishing boat, and I just caught a tuna about that big. It put up quite a fight. Now, it's not that big for ocean fish. If you're catching bass, that's big. And he took my fish, and he very dexterously hooked a hook on the back of my fish and wrapped it with some wire so my fish was still alive and kicking, but it had a hook attached to its back, he threw my fish back out again, and we began to troll. And we were dragging him slowly. And soon, splash, 300-pound marlin that went after our fish. Sometimes, it takes a live fish to catch a fish.

You know who the best soul winners are? New Christians, people that have been recently caught, they are so excited about their faith, they've got enthusiasm. And they're telling all of their friends, and they end up becoming some of the best evangelists, people who still have that first love. Something else is that when you catch fish, predators come in. I've seen it happen more than once, we're reeling in trophy fish, and sharks because you're fighting a while, there's some blood in the water, the sharks smell it, they come, they try to eat your fish before you get it to the boat. Many people remember the famous book by Ernest Hemmingway called "The Old Man and the Sea." He caught the biggest fish in his life, but while he was catching that fish, the sharks came and basically took it all apart before he could get it in the boat. The devil's going to try and stop you if you're catching fish, and so you can't be discouraged.

Another thing, you catch more fish when you work together. I remember reading--by the way, we'll try and post these notes online if you're not getting it all because some of this is not in the lesson. I remember once, we were reeling in a big marlin in the Pacific Ocean, and it just took more than one of us. One is steering the boat, another other one is getting the gaff ready to get him, another one's taking pictures, and another one is reeling. And sometimes, their arm got so tired, this is not a championship, we would switch people. Championships, you can't do that. And when the disciples had their nets filled, it says they beckoned to their friends. And James and John came over to help Peter and Andrew, and they all worked together to bring the net to shore. You know, the best way to do evangelism is when all the people in the church use their gifts together, and that's when you see great success. So, I just thought I'd throw that in for free, just some of the things. Jesus talks about fishing for men, and you might wonder why did He say that.

All right, in our lesson under the first section, it says the second touch. It's talking about making friends for God. And I'll read this to you, Mark chapter 8, verse 22. And I'll just read through verse 25, "Then He came to Bethsaida, and they brought Him a blind man and begged Him to touch him. So, He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of town." There are just maybe too many people. "And when He had spat on his eyes, He put His hands on him and He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up, he said, 'I see men like trees walking.' And then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up, and he was restored, and he saw everyone clearly."

Now, this is an interesting story because it's only one of the few cases in the Bible where it seems like a healing happened in degrees. And when it says he saw men like trees walking, I don't know that that is a symbolic statement. I think that simply means that when you see things, but they're fuzzy, you know, a tree from a distance, it's got all these leaves, said they looked like trees walking. He said, "Oh, things are looking blurry." And so Jesus, now why did Jesus do that? He could've healed him all at once. I think maybe He was illustrating to us that sometimes people's spiritual eyes do not open all at once, that it happens in degrees. Even Jesus told the apostles, "There's many things I have to say to you, but you're not able to bear it right now." And so, He sometimes taught them things in degrees. They didn't fully understand His mission until after His resurrection. Even then, they did not completely understand His mission. Finally, He sent them to the Gentiles, and that was another new revelation.

And so, sometimes God opens our eyes little by little as we can handle it. Another thing is if a person's been in dark for a long time, you turn the lights up full power, and it just turn--they'll turn away and they can't handle it. So, sometimes Jesus heals us in degrees so that we can handle that. Now, I said that's one of a couple examples in the Bible. You look in 2 Kings chapter 4, verse 32, "And when Elisha came

into the house, there was the child lying dead on his bed." You remember the boy of the Shunammite woman died. And the woman laid him on the bed of Elisha in his upper room there. And he comes in and the boy's dead. "He went therefore and he shut the door behind the two of them. He prayed to the Lord, he went up and he lay on the child, and he put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands, and he stretched them out on the child. And the flesh of the child became warm." He was dead and cold. And so, Elisha's basically using his own body to warm the child, but still there was no sign of life other than the body growing warm. He returned, he walked back and forth in the house, and again he went up and he stretched himself on him. And the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes." And so, he sneezed seven times, and that means he was completely healed, and he opened his eyes. So, here you've got another healing that happens in degrees.

You know, the Lord can heal a person instantly. The Lord can heal a person through medical means. When Isaiah told Hezekiah or the physicians of Hezekiah to put a lump of figs on the boil, and he was using medical means. The Lord can heal a person, it might take the healing process. You know, sometimes we pray God heals us, and God says, "Okay, I'm going to heal you, and it's going to take three days." And so, I think the Lord is reminding us that God has a lot of different ways, and sometimes a person doesn't get healed until the resurrection morning. And so, here these healings were happening in degrees.

Now, something interesting about this blind man is that he was brought to Jesus. And in your lesson, you'll notice it says, "Approximately, there are 25 distinct healing miracles in the New Testament performed by Jesus. In more than half of these, a relative or a friend brings the individual to Jesus for healing. Many people will never come to Jesus unless someone else of faith brings them."

You know, that's one of our missions is to bring people to Christ. And if you have a friend that's sick, and you know, this is often a great opportunity to introduce spiritual things. I've had friends and neighbors that didn't really have any religion or any spiritual inclination, but I went to see them in the hospital. And after visiting with them, I say, "Do you mind if I pray for you before I leave?" I've only had one tell me no, and hundreds have said yes, they appreciate it. And some have been very moved, and some have thanked me afterwards, said, "Thank you so much, Pastor." And so, you're actually through the sickness, the sickness is an opportunity to witness to them about Jesus. So, you're bringing them to Christ through the sickness.

Now, you can look for instance in 9--Mark 9:17. Says, "One in the crowd answered and said, 'Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit.'" And so, here's a parent bringing a child. You can read in Mark 2, verse 3, "Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men." Now, here you've got one person, this is the paralytic, he's brought to Jesus, they finally let him down through the roof, and Jesus heals him, but here's four people bringing him. Then you can read in Mark 10, verse 13 through 16, "Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them and bless them." This is not even really a healing, it's just parents bringing their children to Jesus. You know, we all need to bring our children to Christ that He might work in their lives to heal and to save them. And so, a lot of people never come to Jesus unless someone else brings them.

Now, sometimes it's more than one person. And I've often seen that a person's salvation may be the result of several, several different individuals having a role in bringing them to Christ. It's like these four men who carried their one friend to Jesus, he was paralyzed. And I often thought those four stretcher bearers were like the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and it's in the gospel message. Four represents something universal. And so, we're talking about the universal, everlasting gospel that is brought--brings people to Christ.

Think about the story of Naaman in the Bible. I was studying that, and if you know the story about Naaman the leper, who was healed by Elisha, well, first there's a message from a little girl in his house. Then Elisha gives him a message from his servant. Then Naaman's own servants come to him and say, "Why not wash and be clean?" Finally, he surrenders, he washes, he's cleansed from his leprosy. But you notice it's a series of messages. So, when you talk to someone about Jesus and you witness for Christ,

your message may be one of many messages that it takes to reach that person.

Often when I'm praying for other people or loved ones I want to see saved, I say, "Lord, bring into their lives the people that they need to hear." It's not always just one person. Bring the experiences, bring the people that have messages for them that are going to reach them and help bring them to Christ. And so, we need to be praying and bringing others to Jesus through our prayers. Bring them before the throne.

So, next section is under lessons in acceptance. And this is very relevant today because it tells a story about the Samaritan woman. Now, just to understand a little bit about history of the Samaritans, and this will help you when you read the parable of the good Samaritan and some other issues in the Bible, when the tribes in the northern kingdom, the ten tribes in the north, the biggest tribe was Ephraim, because of their unfaithfulness, they began to sacrifice and worship idols at Bethel and Dan. And as a result of that, finally God sent the Assyrians that came in and they took them away captive. And they were carried off to Assyria. And then it tells us that the king of the Assyrians, he then sent some of the Assyrians down from Babylon and other places in his territory to inhabit Samaria.

Now, one reason the kings did this, when he carried off all the Jews as his servants, they vacated their farms, their vineyards, their houses, and the king said, "Look, all that produce, and all that income, and all that grain that could be coming to me, there's nobody there now farming it, and I don't want that land to go to waste." And so, before it all goes to thorns and thistles, he sent some of his people down, he says, "Look, I'm giving you a land grant. You can have all the territory that belonged to the Israelites. You just pay taxes on it and it's yours."

So, all these people came in that were Assyrians and they took over this country. But in the interval while the land was vacated, lions had been multiplying. And the Bible says that there were some lions that were killing the people, they had a raft of lion attacks. They figured the gods were mad. And they said in their minds, "Well, it must be because the people here don't know the nature of the gods of the land. And so, the gods are mad and they're sending lions to punish us." And so, they send this message up to the king of Assyria, and you can read about this in 2 Kings 17, verse 28. 2 Kings 17:28 says, "Then one of the priests whom they carried away from Samaria came and he dwelled in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord."

So, the king said, "Well, maybe I should send one of these priests from Bethel." Now, these are not the sons of Aaron. These are the priests that had been appointed by King Jeroboam that had been kind of comingling the worship of Jehovah with a certain amount of Baal worship and paganism and idolatry. And he began to teach the Samaritans. And some of them intermarried with these priests, and so they had a little bit of Jewish blood, but they were mostly Assyrian. They were a Semitic people. And by the way, you might wonder when you say anti-Semitic, what does that mean? That doesn't just mean anti-Jewish, it means you're against the Semitic people. That would be the Arabs, the Jews, the people who descended from Shem, who was an ancestor of Abraham. And to be anti-Semitic is being anti-Semitic.

So, these were all people who were descendants of Shem, but they were comingling the religion of Jehovah with idolatry and Baal worship, and the worship of the idols at Dan and Bethel. And so, the Jews, they didn't care much for the Samaritans. And things got really bad when the Jews--the people of Judah came back from Babylon. See, the Assyrians never sent the 12 tribes back or the 10 tribes back, but Cyrus the Persian did send back the people of Judah, Benjamin and Levi, to the land of Judah to rebuild the temple. The Samaritans said, "Oh, we worship your God. Let us help you build the temple." And Nehemiah and Ezra said, "No, we know what--you've compromised, you've comingled the worship of idolatry with the true worship of Jehovah. We don't want any help, thank you." Well, that so offended the Samaritans that from that day all the way down through the time of Christ, the Jews and the Samaritans became adversaries. And there was a lot of racial tension between those peoples. And you can read about that in the parable of the good Samaritan, as well as this story of the woman at the well.

So, if you read in John chapter 4, verse 6, "Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, He sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour." Hopefully, there was a shade tree

nearby. "And a woman of Samaria came to draw water." Now, this woman may have been something of an outcast because typically the women came together and they came early in the morning, not during the heat of the day. And so, this woman, she comes by herself to draw water. And Jesus says, "Give me a drink." And you know, that was supposed to be one of the most important sacred duties is to give a person a drink of water, you would always say yes. And that would also mean that there was some bond or friendship if you gave a person a drink of water. "For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food." The reason they let Jesus stay there and rest, they did not want to have Jesus risk contamination from the Samaritans.

Now, you just got to know, friends, in the time of Christ, the Pharisees taught that the Samaritans were so unclean that if the shadow of a Samaritan fell upon you, you could be contaminated. And so, they didn't want Jesus to risk contamination. They said, "You stay here and rest. We'll go, we'll buy some food from the Samaritans, and we'll try to avoid their shadows." And here Jesus is talking to a woman from the well, and she's even surprised. She says, "How is it that You, being a Jew, are asking a drink from me, a Samaritan woman no less? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." She said, "Haven't you heard? We're supposed to hate each other." So, this is a very important lesson from Jesus. "'For the Jews have no dealing with the Samaritans.' And Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that say unto you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him and He would've given you the living water.'"

Now, one thing the Samaritans did believe, they believed the five books of Moses, and they did believe that the Messiah was going to come. And here Jesus is the Messiah, and He's talking to her. And so, here's a lesson in acceptance. You know, Jesus, He loved everybody, and He was willing to reach out to this woman. Finally, she starts to talk to him about, you know, what mountain should we worship on. And she's trying to enter into a senseless dispute over whether you should worship on Mount Gerizim or Mount Zion. Jesus settles the matter, He's like, "Look, salvation is of the Jew. They're the ones God called. He did not call the Samaritans. God committed to the Jews the sacred oracles. But salvation is for everyone. It's from the Jews, but it's for everyone." And then He says, "Go call your husband." And she thought, "Oh, how come the conversation went there?" Well, that was a sore spot in her life because she had had five husbands, and she was living with a boyfriend she wasn't married to. And she said, "Sir, I perceive You're a prophet." And He finally--she said, "I know that when Messiah comes, He'll show us all things."

And Jesus said something to her He did not even say to the scribes and Pharisees and the lawyers. He said, "I who speak to you am He." And she was so astounded, the Holy Spirit swept over her, she realized that He was the Messiah, that He was offering her that living water. She left her water pot, never said she gave Him a drink, so maybe she left it so He could get His own water. She left her water pot and she went into town because she now had living water. And she said, "Come see a man who's shown me all things ever I did."

And Jesus ended up ministering to that whole town of Samaritans. I think He stayed there a few days, talking to them about the kingdom of God, and here the disciples were trying to get Jesus to avoid contact with the Samaritans so He would not be contaminated. They ended up staying with them and witnessing to them, and there was a great revival, and many of them accepted Jesus as the Messiah. And so, that tells us something about sharing the gospel with everybody. You've got to begin where you are.

Now, this is another very important principle in making friends for God. I remember hearing a story where a man was on a train, and he recognized the famous evangelist Billy Graham on the same train. He was going to another town to do a series, he was with his team. And he asked if he could have a word with him, and he said, "Absolutely." He said, "I'm so glad to talk to you." He says, "You have any tips for me?" He says, "I am on my way to this city, where I'm going to catch an airplane, and I'm flying overseas, and I'm going to become a missionary, and I'm going to bring souls to Jesus." And Billy Graham said, "That's wonderful." He said, "Well, first thing I'll ask is, how many people did you reach in your hometown?" Well, he said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, how many have you led to Christ in

your family, or from your friends, or the people you go to school with, or your neighbors?" He said, "Well, none yet, but I'm going to go work--I'm going to go do mission work now among these primitive people overseas." And Billy Graham says, "You probably ought to cancel your ticket." He says, "If you're not reaching anybody in your hometown, then you don't have assurance that God is calling you to lead people in a foreign country with a foreign language and different customs, it's going to be even harder. You've got to start where you are." And you know, this is really what Jesus says.

You can read in Acts chapter 1, verse 8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses," notice the sequence here, "in Jerusalem and in all Judea, in Samaria, and the ends of the earth." Now, He starts in Jerusalem. Where was the Holy Spirit poured out? In Jerusalem. And then He said, "And Judea." After you leave Jerusalem, you're automatically in Judea, that would mean the neighborhood. You start in your family, then you go to the neighborhood and your extended family. And then He said, "Then Samaria." Well, they sometimes had to work with the Samaritans. They could understand the language, but they considered them pagans. That'd maybe be the workplace for you. And then it says the uttermost parts of the earth.

Now, it's interesting, that creates sort of a sequence for us. You know, once you accept the gospel, you would want to share it with your spouse, your children, your parents, your sisters and brothers, your family. And I've seen a lot of people that after they accepted Jesus, they began to share it with their family. Sometimes, they're receptive, and I've seen whole families come in. And then their neighbors, and they go to their workplace, and they might be sharing it with a church of another denomination. And then they'll say, "You know, I'm feeling called to the mission field." At that point, then they may go to the uttermost parts of the earth.

You know, this is exactly what happens in the book of Acts. They start with the Holy Spirit is poured out there in Jerusalem, and then they begin to preach in Judea, and then they call the disciples to help them because the Holy Spirit was poured out in Samaria. And then it says the disciples were scattered everywhere preaching the Word, and that's in Acts chapter 8. And so, we want that same sequence. Jesus said Mark 5:19, after Jesus saved the demoniac, he said, "I want to come with You in Your boat, You and Your disciples." And Jesus would not permit it, but He said, "Go home to your friends. Tell them the great things the Lord has done for you and how He has had compassion for you." Now, it's interesting here in Mark 5, He says, "Go tell your friends." You read the same story in Luke chapter 8, verse 39, He tells the demoniac, "Go to your own house and tell what great things God has done for you."

So, you start in your home, then you go and talk to your friends. Start with those who are near. Best place to use your gifts in witnessing is do the work that lies closest at hand. Every day, we come in contact with people that are in our family, be witnesses for them, our close friends. Like I said, it might be a son, a daughter, a spouse, parent, grandparent, cousin. And start in that circle. Sometimes, they're the hardest to reach, that's why it's a great training ground. Jesus said, "No prophet is without honor except in his own house." And Jesus even had trouble reaching His own brothers to start with, but ultimately they became believers. So, begin where you are.

You can read in John 1, verse 40, "And one of the two who heard John speak, followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother." That's the way to do it. Simon said, "We've found the Messiah," which is translated to Christ, and he brought him to Jesus. Andrew's a great evangelist, he begins by bringing his own family to Christ. You can see also this continues, this expanding pool. In John 6, verse 8, "Then one of His disciples, Andrew, Simon's brother, said to Him, 'There's a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?'" Again, you got Andrew, he's bringing people to Jesus. How did Andrew know there was a lad that only had five loaves and two fish? He was talking to people big and small. He was always making friends. You know, you never see Andrew standing on top of the roof preaching like Peter, but you always see Andrew kind of networking, he's doing more of the friendship sort of evangelism.

And then you can read again in John 12, verse 20, "Now there were certain Greeks among those who

came to worship at the feast. And they came to Phillip, who was from Bethsaida and Galilee, and asked them saying, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.'" Now, these are Greeks, these are Greek believers in Jehovah, but they'd like to know about Jesus. And Phillip's not exactly sure how to handle this, and so it says, "Phillip came and told Andrew. He said, 'Andrew, you know what to do about this one on one evangelism.' He told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Phillip told Jesus." And they brought these Greeks to Jesus.

Now, onto the next section, and this is an interesting section, I'm glad it's in the lesson, it says dealing with difficult people. When you're sharing your faith and you're making friends for Jesus, and you're dealing with different people in unique situations, remember title of our lesson is talking about seeing Jesus--seeing people through Jesus' eyes. Sometimes, you're going to run through people that you might think they're not worth it.

I'm especially sensitive to that because the first few times I came to visit an Adventist church, I had long hair and a beard, and I was really rough looking. I think I was wearing overalls with no shirt on. This was Palm Springs, it was pretty hot there. And I had hiking boots on, and I was pretty scruffy looking. I literally had come out of the hills, and I went into one of the nicer churches in a very expensive city, Palm Springs, where the movie stars hung out. And I could tell I made a few people uncomfortable. And I'll bet there's some people there that thought, "Don't waste your time, this fellow's on drugs," or who knows what they were thinking. But I could just tell that some people were a little intimidated, or they stood off. And they never would've guessed, yes, the Lord can reach even him and that he would become a preacher someday. And so, but I've caught myself judging people. And you've got to be very careful not to do that.

I'll tell you a little story, it actually condemns me. Before the radio program, sometimes I would stop, do a live program, I used to--now, we broadcast here in the building, but used to broadcast from a studio we rented in downtown Sacramento. And I had a regimen where every Sunday night, I'd go eat lunch with one of the men in the church, give me a chance to just bond with one of the men in the church. And this one evening there--for whatever reason, I couldn't find anybody, but I still thought, "Well, I'm going to go to Chipotle and eat a burrito, and just meditate on the amazing fact for that night's program." And just before I walked into the restaurant, I parked my car, somebody walked up to me and they panhandled me. Now, I used to panhandle all the time. You ask people for spare change. And sometimes I help people, and sometimes I don't.

And this person came up and they said, "Hey, could I have some spare change? I'm hungry, I'd like some food." And I sized him up and I thought, "I think he's using drugs." And I said, "No thanks, not tonight." And I went across the street, and I sat down, I got my burrito. And I watched then from across the street, he was in front of a drugstore. And he panhandled, and somebody gave him some money. And then I saw him walk to another corner, and he bought food, and he walked away. He really was hungry, and I judged him by his appearance and thought, "No, he's going to go buy beer. He's going to buy drugs." And I totally misjudged him. And I felt so ashamed. And I wonder how often we sometimes misjudge people because we're looking on the outside and God looks in the heart.

You know, there's an interesting quote in the book "Desire of Ages" page 258. "None have fallen so low, none are so vile but they can find deliverance in Christ." You know, Solomon tells us, "Where there is life, there is hope." If you're going to err, err on the side of showing people mercy. Believe that they're worthwhile.

So, how do you deal with difficult people? And you see, the lesson does admit that some people are difficult to deal with. In 2 John verse 10 and 11, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him, for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds." How do you do--how do you deal with a verse like this if someone doesn't bring this doctrine? Does that mean if a Buddhist comes to your house and he doesn't believe this doctrine, don't receive him? No, John is talking about people who had been Christians that had turned away and they were now spreading heresy. And they weren't going to give up their faith. He said, "Don't encourage them." You know, Jesus makes another statement, He talks about when He sent the disciples out preaching. Look in

Luke chapter 9, verse 5, "And whoever will not receive you when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

I've not seen that very often. You know, the Jehovah Witnesses actually do that. If they go to a home and maybe they go up a street, and if everybody on that street slams the door and says, "We're just not interested," they will actually go through a ritual where they will shake the dust off their feet as they go off to the next street, and taking these words of Jesus literally.

When Christ said that, He's talking about when you're going to people who are believers in Jehovah, these are people who know, and you're sharing that I'm the Messiah. And if you're sharing the truth and you're sharing the best, if they say, "We reject it," it doesn't mean they can't be saved, it means don't wear yourself out. You know, the Bible says, "Do not cast your pearls before swine." What are those pearls? He says, "Don't give that which is holy to the dogs." The dogs return to their own vomit, or they'll turn and rend you. And the dogs--the pigs will return to wallowing in the mire. He said don't waste your time with people who are not open. And that's why He's saying, "Shake the dust off your feet. Don't go back to that town. Go somewhere where it's productive." See, Jesus said this when He said, "If they persecute you in one city, flee unto another." Said, "Don't just stay there and get persecuted, go somewhere where they're open."

I know a successful businessman and when he does evangelism, he goes places where they're baptizing thousands. And someone said to him, "Well, why don't you go to the places where nobody's going? Why don't you go to, you know, places where the gospel's hard?" And he says, "Look, I like to go where the customers are buying." That's a good practice. He says, 'If you're going and you're reaching nobody, well, go somewhere where you can reach somebody."

Now, having said that, I am glad for missionaries who have the long-term vision that go to towns and villages where it's very hard, and they've got the long plan, and they settle down, and they make friends, and they start to plant churches. And they realize they're working in a difficult area. But for evangelists, it's often, you know, if you're going to preach and you're going to try to reach as many as you can, then those people end up going out, and you can multiply and grow things exponentially.

Another thing about difficult people, don't waste your time with people that want to just argue theology with you. They're never getting anywhere, never learning, never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 2, verse 23, "But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing they generate strife."

You know, I know churches that have gotten--argued about so many things, and I've seen churches get divided. I remember hearing a story by the Baptist preacher Adrian Rodgers, he was talking about a church that he knew one time that became divided over the American flag. They had an American flag in the church, and someone said, "That looks like you're putting the country ahead of God." Someone said, "Well, let's put a Christian flag on the other side of the stage." And so, they put a Christian flag, they said, "Well, nowhere in the Bible does it say you should have a Christian flag. And if you're going to have the Christian flag, you should not have the American flag and the Christian flag on the same level because that looks like we're putting them on the even part." So, they put the Christian flag up a little higher. Then that made some people mad and they said, "You know, according to the United States, no flag is to rise higher in the United States than the American flag." And so they said, "Well, let's put them on the same level and just put a piece of paper underneath the Christian flag so you'll know that it's a little higher." And he said they went round and round, and several people actually left the church over arguing about the flags. And they were totally missing the point of the truth.

And so, you know, the Bible tells us to avoid the vain disputes. Sometimes, we major in minors. Someone once said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing in dealing with difficult people." You know, and sometimes people are difficult. They don't mean to be, they're just challenging.

I was pastoring at this one church where, you know, I'm trying to do evangelism, we've got a lot of people coming every week. I want to be at the door shaking hands, meeting the visitors, talking with them, trying to get them into Bible studies. And I had this one member, I'm not even sure he was a

member. I don't think he was, actually, but he came for years. He would always be the first one to the door, and then he would monopolize my time with silly questions. And sometimes, he'd ask the same question week after week. And I knew the Lord loves him, he loves everybody, but this fellow was just taking away my time. And I used to have to pray about, "Lord, what would you do about this?" Would Jesus be rude and say, "Look, don't talk to Me now"? And finally, I developed an understanding with him. I said, "Look, I want to talk to you, but I need to talk to the visitors first. And so, can you do me a favor? If you could wait there and when I'm done talking to the visitors, I'll nod to you, you can come over and you can ask your weekly question." I finally told him, "You get one question a week." And that was--that seemed to work.

So, you know, you just need to pray for wisdom so you can show people love, and yet you don't want the wrong people to distract you with disputes or monopolize your time so that you can't be giving Bible studies to people that will make progress. If you've gone through the 27 Bible studies with somebody and they still haven't made this decision, maybe go through another series of lessons. But I know some Bible workers that have been studying the Bible with people for five years, and you may want to move on to more fruitful territory after a while. So, then finally, sensing the providential openings. You know, God will providentially give us openings. In 2 Corinthians 2, verse 12 and 13, Paul says, "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel and a door was opened to me by the Lord." Paul sensed the door of opportunity. "I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find Titus my brother. But taking my leave of them, I departed from Macedonia." Paul might be referring to that vision where while he was in Troas and he was praying about what to do next, then he saw a man saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when he inquired, it looked like Macedonia was open. The Holy Spirit prevented them from going other places. So, look for those providential openings to do evangelism.

And you know, one reason that we've got this new church here now in Granite Bay, as Sacramento Central began to grow and we saw that we needed to plant a new church, it was just growing where we just had no room left, and we could not build on. We prayed. And we tried to open a church here and tried to open a church there, and the doors just all seemed to close. And finally, someone said, "Well, you know, there is no Adventist Church in Granite Bay." And we did a little research and we said, "You know, God is just opening this door." And now, here we are a few years later, and what started with a group of 12 people has now grown into 700 members. God clearly was providentially opening a door, and we had to look for his opening.

Sometimes, you knock on doors that are closed, and then you say, "Ah, the Lord is opening the door this way," and you need to pray to recognize those openings as well. Acts chapter 8, verse 26, "The angel of the Lord spoke to Phillip, saying, 'Arise and go down towards the south along the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza.'" This is desert. "So, he arose and he went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who are charged of her treasury, he had come to Jerusalem to worship." And here's this man reading from the prophecy of Isaiah, and he's reading out loud from the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 53, where it's talking specifically about the Messiah. And Phillip knows exactly what he's reading, he said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" "Well, how can I except some man explain it to me?" Now, that's a providential opening. Then he hops up in the chariot, leads him to Christ, and then baptized him. So, it was the Lord that led him down there to the desert of Gaza and to give that Bible study.

Paul was going through the streets of Athens, and you can read about this in Acts 17:16. And he's there waiting, and while he's there, he notices that they've got an idol to the unknown god. And so, pretty soon the people hear about Paul's preaching about the resurrection, they bring him into the big theatre there in Athens. And he's looking for an opportunity to talk to them about Jesus, and he thinks, "Oh, how do I do this? These guys are idolaters. I did see that pedestal that was dedicated to the unknown god. And since that's an unknown god, I don't know how I can offend them by talking to them and saying, I'm going to introduce you to that unknown god, that's Jesus."

So, Paul saw a providential opening to take their own religion and talk to them about the Lord. And he

said, "Two--" He said, "I found an altar to the unknown god, therefore the one whom you worship without knowing, him I proclaim to you." He was a master at recognizing these openings. Paul would-- they'd be trying to kill him, he'd preach from the steps of the temple when the mob was trying to kill him.

Friends, we've run out of time for the lesson. I want to mention again we have a free offer. If you'd like this Bible study, simply call 866-788-3966, wonderful book on faith called "Who Do You Think You Are?" We'll send it to you for free if you ask. God bless, we'll study His Word together again next week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen. And be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with "Amazing Facts" wherever and whenever you want, and most important to share it with others.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, changed lives.

Male: I come from a Hindu background. My mom is a preacher for Shiva, who is a Hindu god. My father is agnostic kind, so me myself, I grew like as an atheist. In the year 2007, I had an experience of being in South India. That was the first time I experienced Christian people, you know? The majorities were Christians there. There were some Adventist youth who invited me to be a part of one of their midweek service. They were presenting a video of Pastor Doug Batchelor, "The Richest Caveman." I was moved, you know? I do understand good and bad, and I pictured myself into the bad category than the good one.

I started experiencing several dreams and which started troubling me. And you know, I kept the website in my mind. I went to the Internet cafe and started browsing the website of Amazing Facts. And then I saw the Bible study guide there. Every day, I started taking one of the lesson, and I was baptized 2007. After my conversion, I straightly came to Spicer to do my studies. During the summer vacation, I decided to go back home and give my mom and my father a visit. By that time, they knew that I have converted to Christianity. I was thrown out of the house. We are not in good terms even today, but sad part for them, not for me.

During 2015, I was diagnosed with leukemia. I had only one professor and one friend who was coming along with me to the hospital every day. When I asked this assistant doctor what do you think is the life span of a person like me, then she said, "You'll be losing weight, and you'll get sick slowly, slowly if you don't go for a treatment." So, a year plus, one night I decided--it was January 2015. I said, "I am not going for any treatment anymore." I said, "Lord, you gave me one year, so what I'll do is I'll just do your ministry, and that's okay." And I never went for any treatment after that. I just left everything right away there. I didn't take even one tablet, one medicine. I'm standing in front of you strong in 2018. Nothing happened, I don't know what happened. I don't know--I don't know if still there in my body or what, I don't know. I'm not dead yet. I want to serve in India. "Amazing Facts" team, especially Pastor Doug, has really played a very important element in my life to give me an identity.

Doug: What can be more irresistible than a kitten? These guys might look cute now, but some of their ancestors have grown into man eaters. We're here in a lion park in South Africa now, where we can view these creatures in relative safety, but there's a reason they're known as the king of beasts. So, what is it that people find so enchanting and frightening about lions? Is it their speed, their claws, their sharp teeth, or all of the above? Might also be some of the stories about man eating lions, like in 1898 right here in Africa, they were building a bridge over the Tsavo River in Kenya, and two brother lions terrorized the construction process, eating 135 workers.

Did you know lions are mentioned in the Bible over 100 times? And you can find them all the way from Genesis to Revelation. It's usually in reference to their ferocity and how dangerous they are. Of course, Samson killed a lion with his bare hands. David killed a lion. There are man eating lions in the Bible. The

way that they punished criminals was by throwing them in the lion's den. And early Christians were even fed to lions. But amazingly, as the Bible mentions, not all lions are to be feared. There have been a few friendly lions in history. For example, in the 1950s, a couple, George and Margaret Westbeau, who lived up at a ranch near Seattle, Washington, adopted an abandoned lion cub. They named it Little Tyke because they felt sorry for it.

But they discovered as they tried to feed her, she refused to eat any meat at all. They were concerned, thinking there was no hope for this little lioness to survive, and everybody told them the same because we know in the wild, lions survive on almost an entirely meat diet. Then someone showed the Westbeau that verse in the Bible that talks about in heaven, the animals are vegetarians, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. That encouraged them, and so they began to feed Little Tyke a purely vegetarian diet. Not only did she survive, she thrived, growing into a lion that was over 352 pounds and over 10 feet long. In fact, zoologists that examined Little Tyke when she was full grown said they have never seen such a perfect specimen of a lioness in their life, a pure vegetarian.

You know, when we hear incredible stories about that of Little Tyke, it reminds us that God's original plan was to make a world of total peace. It describes it here in the Bible in Isaiah chapter 11, verse 6, "The wolf also will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. And a little child will lead them." Nothing is going to hurt and destroy in the new heavens and the new earth that God is going to create.

Wouldn't you like to live in a kingdom where there's perfect peace, where there's no more death or killing or pain? God says that He wants you in that kingdom. The Lamb of God made it possible for you to have an encounter with the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Wouldn't you like to meet Him today?

Announcer: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Through radio, television, print, evangelistic events, and the Internet, Amazing Facts International is heeding the call of Jesus to go into all the world. Millions of individuals in over 150 countries have been blessed by the Word of God. "Amazing Facts" has spawned new spheres of influence in India, Africa, China, and Indonesia. With each new country come hundreds of translated booklets, study guides, and video presentations produced in each region for the people of that region. Armed with these precious truths, gospel workers are empowered to spread bright rays of light on every path they travel.

Please visit [reachtheworld.amazingfacts.org](http://reachtheworld.amazingfacts.org) to learn more about Amazing Facts International and how you can participate in this excited soul-winning ministry. That website again is [reachtheworld.amazingfacts.org](http://reachtheworld.amazingfacts.org). Thank you for your support.