

Q3 L08 - **Ministering Like Jesus** - 2020-08-22

Jean Ross: Good morning, friends, and welcome again to "Sabbath School Study Hour" coming to you from Amazing Facts offices in Granite Bay, California. We'd like to welcome all of our regular Sabbath School members who are joining us as well as those across the country and our friends around the world that tune in every week to take a look and study the lesson together. So we've got a very important lesson that we're going to be studying today. It's lesson number eight in our series entitled "Making Friends for God," and lesson number eight is "Ministering Like Jesus." So we're going to be looking at the example of Christ today, learning some very important principles when it comes to sharing our faith.

We do have a free offer we'd like to tell you about, a book entitled "Is It Possible to Live without Sinning?" It's got an intriguing title, and I'd highly recommend this. If you'd like to receive a free book, the number to call is 866-788-3966 and just ask for offer number 187. Again, that phone line is 866-788-3966. Ask for offer number 187. We'll be happy to send it to anyone here in North America. If you're outside of North America, you can also still read the book by simply texting the code SH040 to the number 40544 and we can send you a digital copy of the book. Again, that number is SH040, and you want to text to the number 40544. And I think you'll be encouraged as you read the book, "Is It Possible to Live without Sinning?" And you'll see what the Bible has to say about this important subject.

Well, before we get to our lesson today, we're going to roll in a special musical item and, I think, you'll be blessed, and then we'll get to our study.

♪ I need Thee every hour ♪ Most gracious Lord
♪ No tender voice like Thine ♪ Can peace afford
♪ I need Thee, O I need Thee ♪ Every hour I need Thee
♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪ I come to Thee
♪ I need Thee every hour ♪ Stay Thou nearby
♪ Temptations lose their power ♪ When Thou art nigh
♪ I need Thee, O I need Thee ♪ Every hour I need Thee
♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪ I come to Thee
♪ I need Thee every hour ♪ In joy or pain
♪ Come quickly and abide ♪ Or life is vain
♪ I need Thee, O I need Thee ♪ Every hour I need Thee
♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪ I come to Thee
♪ I need Thee every hour ♪ Teach me Thy will
♪ And Thy which promises ♪ In me fulfill
♪ I need Thee, O I need Thee ♪ Every hour I need Thee
♪ O bless me now, my Savior ♪ I come to Thee

Jean: Amen, well, thank you, Emma, for sharing that beautiful hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour," and indeed those words are so true, we need Christ's Spirit. We need his guidance every single hour, every single day, especially when it comes to sharing our faith and being involved in evangelism; and that's what our lesson is all about today. Well, before we get to our study, I invite you just to bow your heads as we ask God's blessing to be with us.

Dear Father, we thank You that we're able to open up the Bible and study a very important subject dealing with how Jesus ministered to those around him and how we also, following his example, can minister to our friends, our neighbors, those that we come in contact with. So, Lord, we ask for Your

blessing. Guard our hearts and our minds as we open Your Word in Jesus' name, amen.

Well, our lesson today, lesson number eight in our Sabbath School quarterly, it's entitled "Ministering Like Jesus." And if you've been following along with us, we do have a memory text, and you might have it right there in your lesson quarterly. The memory text is Matthew chapter 9, verse 36, and you can say that with me. Matthew 9:36 it says, "But when he," Jesus, "saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion for them because they were weary and scattered like sheep having no shepherd." We find that Jesus was genuinely care. He cared about people, and he met their physical, mental, and emotional needs. Those that were around him, he was always reaching out. Thus, he was opening their heart to minister to them spiritual truths. He was able to share with them the gospel.

Maybe you've heard it said before. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care, and how true that is when it comes to evangelism. Now, there is a very important statement that we find in the book, "Ministry of Healing," and I think we've mentioned this statement before. It's on page 143, but it's kind of sort of be the springboard for our study today. "Ministry of Healing" page 143, and it's talking about Christ's method of evangelism. It says, "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed his sympathy for them, he ministered to their needs and won their confidence, then he bade them, 'Follow me.'"

Now, the first thing I want you to notice is that there is one method of evangelism that brings true success, and that's Christ's method. So if we can find out what Jesus did to reach people around him and we follow his example and his method for evangelism, well, the promise is we will be successful. What is it that Jesus did? Well, the first thing we note here is that Jesus mingled with men. He was not aloof, he didn't keep himself at a distance, but he got to know people. He allowed people to approach him. He visited with them, he talked to them, he ate with them. Jesus engaged with people, he interacted with them.

So the first principle that we find when it comes to evangelism is we need to be friendly. We need to be approachable. We need to reach out and engage with other people. Secondly, we find that Jesus ministered to their needs. Now, some of the needs that Jesus addressed were social needs. Sometimes it was emotional, sometimes physical; ultimately spiritual. Jesus always went that direction, wanting to bring them the gospel and truth. But Jesus ministered to their needs, and in doing so he won their confidence so that he was able to share with them the way of life, the keys for eternal life.

And I think that's important when it comes to our work of evangelism. We're ministering to the needs of people, we are getting to know them, but the real goal is to win their confidence so that they are willing to share with us a genuine concern or a need that they have. And in so doing, we can pray for them, we can minister to their need, we can win their confidence so that they will be open to hear what we have to say about Jesus our Savior. So Jesus met the needs of people around him. He was always interested in what people were doing, what they were saying, what they were thinking. He looked for examples and ways that he could minister to whatever the needs are that he saw.

Now, we have some wonderful examples of this given in the first few chapters of the Gospel of John, how Jesus ministered to the needs of those around him. You'll find in John chapter 2 Jesus ministering to a social need. Let me give you the background to the story. This is just after the baptism of Christ. Jesus and his first five disciples, they were invited to a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Now, John the Baptist was baptizing down in the southern part, close to--in Judea, close to Jerusalem. And so it was a fair journey for Jesus and his first five disciples, which were Andrew, Peter, John, Philip, and Nathaniel, to travel all the way up to Galilee, and they went to a town called Cana. We're not quite sure where that town is today, but there was a wedding that was taking place and apparently the mother of Jesus, who was involved in the preparations--apparently, it could have been a relative or a close friend of the family, but Jesus is there with the disciples. And during the wedding, the Bible tells us they ran out of wine. Literally, the wine failed and the mother of Jesus came to Christ and said, you know, "They've

run out of wine." And Jesus said, "Well, what do I have to do? My hour is not yet come." Maybe she was hoping that Jesus would perform a miracle, proclaim himself as the Messiah. Nevertheless, Jesus did meet that need.

There were six stone water jugs that were set to the side, used for the purifying of the Jews. And Jesus told the servants to fill the water jugs full of water and then to draw out some of the water and take it to the governor of the feast. And somewhere in the process of drawing out the water, the water became new wine or pure grape juice. When the governor of the feast tasted the water that was turned to grape juice or new wine, he marveled and he said, "Usually people put the best first, but you have kept the best until last."

So the first thing that we find Jesus--we find Jesus when he begins his public ministry, he ministers to a social need to avoid embarrassment, and it also pronounces Christ's blessing on marriage.

Well, the second need that we see Jesus meeting in the Gospel of John is in John chapter 3, and that's the famous story of Jesus and his night visit with Nicodemus. And Nicodemus had a spiritual need that Jesus addressed, and Jesus said, "Except you be born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." Nicodemus said, "How can a man be born again when he's old?" Jesus began to explain the process of new birth, and those seeds of truth that were planted in the heart, in the mind of Nicodemus that night eventually grew and bore great fruit, especially after the resurrection of Christ when Nicodemus used his resources to help the fledgling Christian church and he himself also boldly claimed to be a follower of Christ.

The next need that we find Jesus meeting in John chapter 4 is an emotional need, and in this story we find Jesus and his disciples traveling up to Galilee once again. And they're going through the area known as Samaria, and at Jacob's Well Jesus meets a woman who has an emotional need. As you get into the story, you'll find out that she had been married six times and the person that she was living with was not her husband, and yet she had a longing for meaning and purpose in her life. She had an emotional need. She wanted to belong, and Jesus opened up the truths of real joy and peace and longing and she was encouraged. Matter of fact, she went--she told everyone in the village, "I have found the man, the Messiah." She was the first--one of the first missionaries that took the gospel. So in John 4, we find Jesus meeting an emotional need.

In John 5, we find Jesus meeting a physical need, and this is the story of a man who had been laying for 38 years, the paralytic that was laying by the pool of Bethesda. And Jesus came on a Sabbath and said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" And the man said, "I have no one to carry me and put me in the water when the water is troubled." And Jesus said, "Rise, take up your bed, and walk." And the man was healed immediately. So in those first few chapters of the Gospel of John, we get a taste of the ministry that Jesus was doing, meeting the spiritual need, the physical, the emotional.

Jesus ministered to those--the emotional need, those that were around him. So that was Christ's attitude. We can see Christ's attitude in ministering to people. Now on Sunday, the lesson is actually entitled "Jesus's Attitude towards People," and Jesus always looked for the good in others. He drew out the best in them. One of the criticisms that the religious leaders gave of Christ is that he receives sinners and he eats with them. Now, they were concerned because he interacted with the ungodly. They were surprised when Jesus himself said, "For I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Jesus spoke of himself as coming to seek and save the lost. That was his mission; that needs to be our mission. In Matthew chapter 5, verse 13 we read, Jesus speaking, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by man." So Jesus likens the believer, the Christian to being the salt of the earth. Salt back in Bible times, in the ancient world, was extremely valuable, a lot more valuable than today. Even Roman soldiers were often paid by salt, and that's where the word salary comes from. It comes from being paid by salt. Salt was used to preserve food. It was also used for flavoring.

Now, the true wealth in the world--today the salt is committed Christians, those who love God and those

who are willing to make His gospel known to those around them. Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth." But if we lose that spirit of evangelism, if we lose the love of souls, if we lose our commitment to Christ, what good are we? What can we do? How can we help those in need if we lose that desire for evangelism, that commitment to making the truths of the gospel known?

In Matthew chapter 5, verse 14, Jesus used another illustration as to what the Christian needs to do. Matthew 5:14, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." So the Christian is likened unto salt, but we're also likened unto light.

Light does not avoid darkness, but light dispels the darkness. And so as Christians, we are not to avoid those in need, but we ought to shine forth the love of Jesus into the darkness of the hearts of those who have never experienced the grace and the power of God not only in forgiveness, but also transformation in their hearts and lives. It is God's desire that His church shine forth the glory or the character of the Savior. We actually find that to be the mission of the remnant we find in Revelation chapter 18, verse 1 and 2. We call this the fourth angel's message. It says, "After these things, I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory."

Now, these angels that we read about in Revelation, both the three angels that we find in Revelation chapter 14; you call it the first, second, and third angel's message, plus this fourth angel that we read about in Revelation chapter 18, represent God's people in the last days that are taking the everlasting gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

So this fourth angel that illuminates the world with the glory or the character of God really represents you and I, represents the church. And the work that we have to do is--verse 2, "And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen.'" And then if you jump down to verse 4, it says, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues.'" Now, who is this other voice from heaven that we read about in verse 4? That would be the voice of Jesus. Jesus said, "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold, but I'll call them and they'll come, and there'll be one fold and one shepherd." In order for Jesus to call His people out of religious confusion, out of Babylon, God has given us a work to do, and that is to proclaim and reveal the glory of God to the world.

So central to the work of the remnant in the last days is the work of evangelism. That's why we are here. That's the work that God has given us to do. In John chapter 17, verse 15, we read the words of Jesus, "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth." And then verse 18, "As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." So just as Jesus had come to seek and save the lost, to minister to the needs of those around him, to win their confidence and share the gospel and share truth, so we as the followers of Christ are to follow in his example.

Now, we can see three distinct phases in the work of Christ. The first is what we call the prepare phase. Just before Jesus would go to towns and villages and preach the gospel, he would often send his disciples before him to prepare the way. The entire public ministry of Jesus was prepared by John the Baptist, who went and preached and prepared the way for Jesus. Jesus sent out the 12 disciples to different towns and villages, and you can read another occasion where Jesus sent out 70 others who were to go and prepare the way before him. So the first phase of Christ's ministry is preparation, and we'll look at how that relates to the church in just a few moments.

The second phase that we see of Christ's ministry was that of preaching, where Jesus would go to those same towns and villages and he would preach where the work had been done--where the preparation was done. And then the third phase, a very important phase of the ministry of Christ, was that of preserve.

Jesus taught the importance of nurturing new believers, and that's the work that the church needs to do. You got to remember that the baptism isn't the finish line when it comes to evangelism. In reality, it is

the starting line. You can see how the early Christian church was established; not only to preach the gospel to those who have never heard, but it was also established to preserve and nurture those who did believe.

And we can see this truth beautifully illustrated in a parable that Jesus told. It's a familiar parable. It's the parable of the Good Samaritan, and it's recorded for us in Luke chapter 10. And the story is about a man traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho. And geographically if you were to go from Jerusalem to Jericho, you would literally go down. Jericho is close to the Dead Sea, which is the lowest body of water on the earth. So there was quite a geographical change, and the man's traveling from Jerusalem down a very twisty mountainous road with caves and rocks. And as he's traveling down to Jericho, Jesus said the thieves came.

He fell amongst thieves, and they stripped the man of his raiment, they beat him, they left him half dead, and there he was on the side of the road. But then a priest came by and the priest didn't really do anything for him, neither did the Levite. But when the Samaritan came by--and of course you understand that the Jews and the Samaritans, they did not get along. But when the Samaritan came by and he saw the man, Jesus said he had compassion upon him and he went over to the man and ministered to his needs. Jesus said that he poured in oil and wine into his wounds. He probably covered him with his own cloak and placed him on a donkey and took him to an inn. And then he ministered to the man there in the inn, but then he told the innkeeper, "I need to go. If you spend any more money than I've given you, I will richly repay you when I come back again."

Now in the parable, this man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho in one sense can represent the whole human race. The priest could represent the sacrificial system of the Old Testament that couldn't really take care of the sin problem. The Levite could represent the chosen people, Israel. Again, they would appoint people to Christ. They were not the final solution. But the Good Samaritan, of course, represents Jesus.

Jesus came to minister to our needs. It says he poured in oil and wine into the man's wounds, nursed him. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; this new wine a symbol of the atoning blood of Christ. And then the Samaritan took the man to the inn and took care of him and gave money to the innkeeper and said, "You take care of the man."

Where does Jesus take those who have responded to the gospel of grace? Those whom he has forgiven, where does he take them? He takes them to the church, and Jesus has given the church talents and abilities. And Christ says to us, "You take care of these people. You nurture them. You build them up, and when I come again, I will richly repay you." So we can see even in the parable that Jesus told the importance of nurturing new believers. It's so important when it comes to evangelism.

Well then moving on, on Monday the lesson is entitled "Jesus's Treatment of People." And we've got a few Bible stories here that help illustrate how Jesus ministered to people around him, and one of my favorites is in Matthew chapter 8 from verse 5 through 10. You have the story of the healing of the centurion's servant, and it goes like this. Matthew chapter 8, verse 5, "Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him pleading with him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.'"

Now, remember this is a centurion. This is a Roman officer. This is not a Jew, but he heard something of Jesus and faith awakened in his heart and he said, "I'm going to go find Jesus." And when he finds Jesus and tells him his problem, Jesus says, "I will come and I will heal him." You'd think that most people would say, "Fantastic." They would say, "Clear the way. Jesus is coming to my house." But that's not this man's response. Look at what he says. Verse 8, "The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but only speak a word and my servant will be healed. For I'm also a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another one, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard it," take note of this, "When Jesus heard it, he marveled and he said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say unto you,

I have not found so great of faith; no, not in Israel."

Of course, Jesus did speak the word and the centurion's servant was healed. You can just imagine the man saying, "I'm not worthy, Lord, for you to come under my roof, but just speak the word." He had faith in the power of the word of Christ. And when Jesus heard that, he turned to those standing around him and said, "I have not seen this kind of faith; no, not in Israel." Here we find Jesus encouraging the faith of this centurion and using his faith as an example to the Jews who were lacking this kind of faith, that whatever Jesus said they believed or he believed--the centurion believed it would happen because there was power in the word of Christ, and we want to encourage that same kind of faith in the people that we minister to.

We have another story recorded for us in Mark chapter 12, verse 34, and this is where a scribe comes to Jesus and asks--asked Christ what is the greatest commandment in the law, and you'll recall the response of Christ. He said there are actually two commandments. The first is to love the Lord thy God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength; and the second is like unto it, you must love your neighbor as yourself. Well, after Jesus said that, these words made such an impression upon the scribe he responded and said, "You have answered correctly." He said, "Indeed, to love God with everything is the most important, to love your neighbor as yourself." But then Jesus responded to him. This is verse 34 of Mark 12. "Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'"

Now, that's quite a statement. Here is a scribe searching for truth, wanting to find the way of life. He asks Jesus a question because he was genuinely concerned. Jesus gave him an answer. He responded positively to that answer, and then Jesus said, "You're not far from the kingdom of God." That must have encouraged him to learn more, to study further.

We want to encourage people in their walk with Christ. It's easy to discourage someone by pointing out their faults and their errors and their sins, but what Jesus did was to encourage people, to build on their faith. Even if it was a little, Christ wanted to strengthen their faith and build on it. So learning from the example of Jesus, we can see that Christ looked for the good in people around him and he tried to encourage faith. He tried to encourage spiritual growth. Isaiah chapter 42, verse 3, it says, "A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoking flax He will not quench."

In other words, Jesus was careful not to needlessly bruise a sensitive soul. He tried to encourage people. Colossians chapter 4, verse 5 and 6 it says, "Walk in wisdom towards those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you might know how you ought to answer each one." So when it comes to evangelism, here Paul is telling us in Colossians, those outside the church how we're to treat them. Let your speech be seasoned with grace, and pray that God will give you wisdom as you interact with them. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 15 says, "But speak the truth in love, that you might grow up in all things unto Him who is the head, which is Christ."

So we are to speak the truth in love. We are to always speak with grace. We can find that this is an important work when it comes to evangelism because it's planting seeds of truth in the hearts and the minds of people. When it comes to evangelism, we can see the example of Jesus. There are different phases of the work that Christ did, and we want to learn from Jesus. He is our example.

Now, I want you to imagine for a moment a farmer who decides to grow wheat. And so he plows up his field and maybe he fertilizes it and he waits for the wheat to grow, but nothing seems to happen. His neighbors, their fields are filled with green shoots of growing wheat, but he's got nothing growing in his field. And so he goes to his farmer friends and he says to them, "I'm not sure why wheat is not growing in my field." And so they ask him what type of fertilizer he used. He tells them. And they ask him, "Did you check the pH balance of the soil?" And he tells them yes, and they can't figure it out.

Well, one day all of his friends come over to his farm because they're curious about this, and there they walk out onto the farm, onto the dirt, and onto his field and around it is beautiful green fields, but nothing is growing on his field. So finally one of his farmer friend says to him, "Well, say, what kind of

seeds did you plant anyway?" Well, with that, our farmer friend looks down and a little embarrassed he says, "Well, you know, I've been hoping for wheat, I've been praying for wheat, but I guess I didn't plant any seeds."

Now, of course, that's not a true story. There isn't a farmer alive that would expect a harvest without first planting seeds. But when it comes to evangelism, we pray for a harvest, we hope for a harvest, but often we neglect the importance of planting the seeds of the gospel. We look at the example of Jesus, he was always planting spiritual seeds.

Now, when it comes to evangelism, there are different phases that make evangelism successful. We typically call this the evangelism cycle, and it's been divided up into six phases of evangelism and each of them are important. You've got the personal preparation phase. This is even before you get involved in some kind of evangelistic outreach. Phase two is preparing the soil, phase three is what's called sowing the seed, and then you've got four--phase four, cultivating; phase five, the harvest; and phase six is preserving the harvest.

So I'm going to just highlight a few things about this evangelism cycle as we look at the example of Christ. The first phase is personal preparation, and it begins with us as individuals. We are to seek for revival. We are told in "Review and Herald" March 22, 1887, it says, "The revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and the most urgent of all of our needs. To seek this should be our first work."

So in this phase of personal preparation, we are to seek revival. How do we do that? Well, we spend time in prayer, we spend time studying the Word. Some of the last words that Jesus told his disciples before ascending to heaven, he said that they were to go to all the world and they were to preach the gospel. But before they were to go out to the world and preach the gospel, Jesus told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from the Holy Spirit. In order for evangelism to be successful, we must be filled with the Spirit of God. You can't give something that you don't have. So the first phase of evangelism is seeking for a deeper experience, pleading for the Holy Spirit, spending time in prayer.

It's also wise to do some planning. What is the plan for the church? What are we going to do to try and reach out to those in the community? So some of the things that we want to be looking for during this first phase of evangelism, we're looking at the spiritual, practical Christian experience of the believers. We're looking at the commitment that the individual members in the church have to evangelism, to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

The focus of the church needs to be on the work of evangelism, sharing the gospel. We want to have some planning taking place. We want to plan for an evangelistic series, some other training events taking place. So the first phase of this evangelism cycle is spending time preparing our hearts and our minds for the work before us. Before Jesus started His public ministry, right after His baptism He went into the wilderness for 40 days, where He spent time fasting and praying, where He was equipped and filled with the Spirit and prepared for the great work that He was about to do.

The second phase, then, of this evangelism cycle is what we call preparing the soil. Before the farmer plants the seed, he needs to go plow up the soil, and he needs to fertilize, etc. What does this involve in an evangelism cycle? Well, we want to be involved with things like friendship evangelism; getting to know people, find out about their family, their occupation, what is their religious background. Maybe you can even share your own personal testimony with the people you engage with. The church wants to be involved in community service programs where we are ministering to the needs of those around us. We might also want to start advertising for Bible studies. We might want to do surveys door to door to find out the interest--the spiritual interests of the people in the community. We want to be involved in building up a database of names of people that we can follow up on, those who might be interested in spiritual things.

So what are we looking for in this second phase of the evangelism cycle? We're looking for the number of positive relationships between the church and the people in the community. We're also looking for the number of positive relationships between the members of the church and non-members, those in

the community around us.

Now on Tuesday, the lesson is entitled "Jesus's Healing Ministry," and there's two parts. So Tuesday is part one, and then Wednesday is part two. And in the introductory to Tuesday's lesson, it says Jesus ministered to the needs of people. One of the greatest needs that Jesus addressed was in the area of health and healing. The ultimate need, however, is that of having a saving, transforming relationship with God. Jesus said, "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Jesus was concerned about the quality of life that people had. Not only concerned about their need or the quality of their life now, but he was ultimately concerned about their eternal destiny, concerned about having--them having eternal life.

So we can see how Jesus used healing--the work of ministry in healing to lead people to a spiritual experience. We have a couple of stories that are given in our lesson, of how Jesus did this. We have one in Matthew chapter 9. It's the healing of the man lowered through the roof, and this is what it is. Matthew chapter 9. You can also read this story in Mark. A parallel passage there. It says, "So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own city." That would be Capernaum, and that was the home also of Simon Peter. We believe this story actually took place in the home of Simon Peter. Verse 2 says, "Then behold, they brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven you.'"

Now, again, Mark tells us that this story took place in a house. And the man on the bed was carried by his friends to Jesus, but they couldn't get in because of the crowd so they went up onto the roof. And as Jesus is preaching and teachings, suddenly he is interrupted by a scraping noise as they begin to move the roof tiles. The roofs back in those days--flat roofs, and often there was a hole in the center of that--of the room where the smoke from the fire could go, and there were tiles that were covering, often, that opening. And here Jesus is preaching and suddenly stops, and everybody begins to look up as the tiles are moved. And here is this man lowered down to where Jesus is, and of course everybody's staring at Christ wondering what he's going to do. And Jesus looking at the man, he knows his real need.

So before even healing him physically, Jesus wanted to heal him spiritually, and that's why Jesus said those beautiful words. "Son, be of good cheer. Your sins are forgiven you." And before the man could even respond--I'm sure there was peace in his heart, but before he could say anything--the story goes on. It says, verse 3, "And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, 'This man blasphemes.'" You see, rightfully they knew that only God could forgive sins, and they said Jesus is blaspheming because, you know, he's forgiving sins. But of course they didn't recognize Jesus as God, and Jesus had the power to forgive. And verse 4, "But Jesus knowing their thoughts he said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? For what is easy to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk?'"

Now for us, if we put ourselves in the place of Christ and somebody was in need of forgiveness and they were in need of a miracle, we might think, "Well, the easier thing to do is to forgive them." I mean, especially if they didn't hurt us too badly, we can say, "Okay, I forgive you." But when it comes to performing a miracle, well, that's something we can't do. We can't perform miracles. But in the case of Jesus, what was easier for Jesus? Was it easier for Jesus to forgive, or was it easier for Jesus to perform a miracle?

You see, what does it take for Jesus to perform a miracle? He simply needs to speak the Word and the man is healed, but what did it take for Jesus to be able to give that man forgiveness? You see, Jesus knew that in order for him to provide forgiveness, it would involve a cross. It would involve his crucifixion, his suffering, his death. Thus Jesus said, "What do you think is easy to say: 'Your sins are forgiven?' or 'Rise and walk?'" You see, Jesus was illustrating here the importance of spiritual healing. Yes, physical healing is good and nice, but in the eyes of God, even more important than physical healing is spiritual healing. It's obtaining that forgiveness that only Jesus can give. And then verse 6, "But that you might know that the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins. He said to the paralytic, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' And he arose and he departed." Of course, the people were amazed, and they saw what Jesus did.

We have another story recorded for us in Mark chapter 5, and I'm not going to read through the whole story because of time. But it's a woman that came to Jesus while he was journeying in a crowd and she couldn't actually get close to him, but she was able to reach out and touch the hem of his garment and she was healed of this flowing of blood that she had struggled with for 12 years. And when she reached out and she touched the hem of Christ's robe, immediately she was healed. She knew within herself that she had been healed. She kind of slipped back into the crowd, but Jesus stopped and he turned to his disciples and he said, "Who touched me?" The disciples said, "But, Lord, there's so many people pressing in around you. How can you ask, 'Who touched me?'" Jesus says, "No, somebody touched me. I felt virtual power go out of me." And then of course she came forward, she confessed everything. It says she was trembling, she was afraid. But Jesus said to her in verse 34 of Mark 5, "Daughter, your faith has made you whole. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jesus affirmed her faith. Jesus encouraged her. So Jesus ministered to all kinds of people; those who were strong in faith, those who were weak in faith. He ministered to those who were humble, all classes of people. Didn't matter what their position. Jesus recognized that here is a soul to be saved, and so it is when it comes to our work of evangelism.

We want to be planting seeds of truth. So we minister to the physical needs of people. We want to win their confidence so that we can share Bible truth, and the way we do this in a practical way is through different types of Bible studies. It might be a personal, one-on-one Bible study. We could drop off a lesson that somebody could read on their own at home. We might invite somebody to a small group Bible study.

But just as Jesus ultimately wanted to lead people to a saving relationship, so we in our work of evangelism want to lead people to being exposed to Bible truth so that they can make a decision for Jesus. We also read that an important part of the work that we have to do when it comes to evangelism is cultivating these new interests, those who show an interest in spiritual things. In doing so, we might want to invite them to church--to some church activity, we might want to invite them to a special program that the church is putting on. We want to introduce them to other church members who might have similar interests or backgrounds, and of course one of the greatest things you could do is invite them to come to your home for a small group Bible study. Maybe a meal at first and then transition that into a Bible study.

So some of the things that we are looking for here is the number of consistent personal Bible studies that are taking place between the church members and those in the community. We also want to look for the number of people who are actually attending these bridge events that the church might put on, health seminars and alike.

Well, then we come to Wednesday, and Wednesday's lesson continuing with Jesus's example of healing people. We also see that there were three phases to the work of Jesus: teaching, preaching, and healing. In Matthew chapter 4, verse 23 it says, "And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sicknesses, all kinds of diseases amongst the people."

So there we see Jesus teaching, preaching, and healing. In Mark chapter 1, verse 32 it says, "At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed, and the whole city was gathered together at the door." This is after the healing that took place of a demon-possessed man in the synagogue that Sabbath morning. Now the sun had set, Saturday evening, and people came. This is taking place at Capernaum. People brought their sick to Jesus, and He healed them. Verse 34 says, "And He healed many who were sick of various diseases. He cast out many demons. He did not allow the demons to speak because they knew him. Now in the morning," this would be early Sunday morning, "having risen a long time before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place and He prayed. And then Simon," whose house Jesus was staying at, "And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him, and when they found Him, they said to Him, 'Everyone is looking for you.'" Speaking to Jesus. "But He said to them, 'Let us go into the next towns, that I might preach there also

because for this purpose I've come forth.' And he was preaching in their synagogues throughout all of Galilee, casting out demons."

So we find that Jesus was not content just to minister to those that were close to Him. Jesus has a burden to minister to as many people as possible, and He actually began His first Galilean tour traveling from town to town, village to village. He was preaching the gospel. He was healing. He was sharing with them the truths of the kingdom. In Luke chapter 19, verse 10, Jesus says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost."

So we see an important phase of Christ's ministry not just ministering to the needs of people and not just providing healing, but we also see a very definite emphasis on the preaching part of Christ's ministry. When it comes to evangelism, we don't want to neglect the importance of evangelistic preaching. And I want to encourage churches, especially those that haven't done an evangelistic series for a while. I want to encourage churches to be involved in doing a public evangelistic meeting. And during this public evangelistic meeting, you want to invite those that you've ministered to, those who have--you want to reap confidence, you've built relationship with them. You want to invite them to come. And during this evangelistic series, you want the message, the gospel, the three angels' messages to be preached clearly, and you want to call for a decision. You want people to respond.

Now, if you can't do an evangelistic series in person; maybe you don't have any evangelists, maybe the pastor is unable to preach an evangelistic series, you can still do a video evangelistic series. You can even invite people to your home and you could do a evangelistic series right there on the television. You can invite them night after night, but the goal is to share these life-saving truths, the three angels' messages with people.

What are the things you're looking for in this phase? Well, first of all, you want to get a crowd. You want as many people to come out to your evangelistic series as possible so that they can hear the Word. You want to keep a crowd; so that might involve visiting people throughout the evangelistic series, encouraging them to come, giving them resources and materials, answering their questions, and you want to baptize a crowd. Jesus said, "Go preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I've commanded you. Lo, I am with you always, even until the very end."

So the commission that we've been given by Christ is to preach, to teach, and to baptize, to bring people into a saving relationship with Christ. Now, once somebody makes that decision to be baptized and to join the church, we mustn't neglect the importance of preserving their faith and growing their faith. Statistically, if a person doesn't develop meaningful friendships within the church in the first few months of when they join, it's very unlikely that they will actually stay with the church. So not only presenting Bible truth is important, but also connecting them with other like-minded believers, building relationships, encouraging them in their walk with Christ; especially if maybe they're the only believer in their family and they're going to have challenges at family, maybe they're going to have challenges at work because they are standing up for Bible truths. As a church, we want to be there to encourage people and to build them up.

So in summary then looking at the example of Jesus, we find Jesus involved in different phases of ministry. We see Jesus ministering to the physical needs of people. We see Christ interacting, befriending people. And as he won their confidence, he began to share with them the truths of the gospel. We want to follow Christ's example in getting to know people, being friendly, being approachable, allowing people to come and building relationship with them, ministering to their needs, winning their confidence so that we can share the Word. Maybe that'll be inviting them to an evangelistic series, maybe inviting them to a small group Bible study, or maybe even just a one-on-one Bible study. But we want to get to the point where we're able to share the Word with them, and then we need to nurture these new believers in their relationship with Christ.

Three reasons why evangelism sometimes does not work, we don't plant enough seeds. We need to

remember that the seed is in the harvest. We need to keep doing the work of evangelism, and we neglect preserving the harvest. We don't want people coming in through the front door of the church, but leaving through the back door. We want to hold on to them. We want to nurture them, we want them to grow. In closing then, let me share with you this verse. 2 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 6, "But this I say, he who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly, but he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully." God wants us to plant the seeds of the gospel as far and as wide as we possibly can, that there might be a rich harvest of souls for the kingdom.

I want to remind you, friends, about our free offer for today. It's a book entitled "Is It Possible to Live without Sinning?" And we'd like to make this available to anyone in North America. Just call 866-788-3966 and ask for offer number 187. We'll be happy to put in the mail and send it to you. If you would like a digital copy of the book, you just need to text the code SH040 to the number 40544. You'll get a digital copy of the book, "Is It Possible to Live without Sinning?"

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 keyword 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.

Diamond Garcia: Hi, my name is Diamond Garcia and I am from the beautiful islands of Hawaii. I was raised in a very dysfunctional family, like most families. Being in that environment, I would lie, cheat, steal, rob houses, cheat in school and tests and lie to teachers, and getting into fights and all kinds of stuff. One day I was asked to take this little box of something and I had to walk down the road and give it to someone and they will give me money and I'll walk back home, and I later realized I was dealing drugs.

Growing up in that environment, I thought that, you know, being an adult was a life of drinking and smoking and partying, and that's just what adults did. When I looked at my family and saw the road that they were going down: getting arrested, getting beaten up, coming home drunk and puking all over the floor, I just didn't want that for myself. Growing up, I had a grandma who was baptized as a Christian in her 20s, but then she wasn't a real practicing Christian. And so one day I was at her house and there was a box of various books, and I went to the bottom of that box and found a book called "The Great Controversy." And I picked it up and I said, "This is interesting." And I opened to the first page of that book and it said, "If thou hadst known." I had no clue what it meant, and so I said, "You know what? Forget this." I put the book down. I just walked away, did my thing.

But then something told me, "You know what, Diamond? Go back to that book." And so I went back to the book, picked it up, went to the last two chapters, and I read it. And I said to my grandmother, I said, "What church is this from? I want to go to that church." So she brought me down to the local church, and then I walked in through the back door and the piano is off-key, people are off-key. It's like, "Man, this is really kind of--I don't want to be here." And I got to the front of the church and I sat down. I was listening to the sermon and the whole service was so boring to me, but then someone gives me this set of DVDs and it was called "The Prophecy Code."

It was through watching Doug Batchelor explain the truths found in the Bible that really brought me to Christ and brought me to realize that, "You know what? There is a life better than my family's life." My second week at church on Sabbath, there was one person there. He basically told me, "Hey, Diamond. Do you want to make some money?" And I said, "Sure." I said, "What do you do?" He says, "Well, I'm a call porter. We go door to door and we sell Christian books." I said, "Oh, okay, well, that sounds interesting. I do want to make some money, too." And so he said, "Okay, well, why don't you come with me?"

We drove out to the neighborhood, parked the car, and that night was just raining. It was pouring and pouring. It could not stop raining. He prayed. He said, "God, this is Diamond's first night. If it's Your will, stop the rain so we can go knocking on doors." And as soon as he said amen, the rain just stopped. I was just thinking in my head, "Is this guy a prophet or what? I mean, he just prayed and asked God and it happened." And so I was so happy. I got the books and I went to the first door. And the first door I went to, the person gave me 50 bucks. That night was actually a big night for me because it was where I saw God's power work in stopping the rain and people actually giving me lots of money.

I then became a colporteur or a canvasser, and I saved money to pay for my way through academy. And when my church began to see how God was using me, they immediately recognized that it was God's Word moving and they put me, you know, preaching and teaching and sharing my faith, and I've been engaged in ministry for the past 6 or 7 years now and God has taken me all over the world on multiple continents sharing my testimony, how God has brought me out of darkness into his marvelous light, which is total contrast as to how it was before and now. You know, total contrast. My name is Diamond, and Amazing Facts has helped to change my life.

Doug Batchelor: Flying sounds really exotic when you're young. As you get older, if you do any commercial flight, it can lose its luster. The longest commercial flight in the world goes from Auckland, New Zealand to Dubai, over 17 hours, 8,800 miles. That's a long flight, especially if you're stuck in the middle seat. You spend a long time looking at your watch, waiting for the plane to land.

But scientists have now found there are some birds that can fly much longer than anything a man has made. Matter of fact, for years they've known that the great frigate birds can stay on the wing for several weeks. We always thought that was impressive until recently when scientists in Sweden did an experiment with the common swift. They have these very lightweight micro-transmitters. They put them on 13 swift birds and let them go. They discovered that three of those swifts did not land even one time in 10 months. Ten months of non-stop flying.

So someone might naturally be wondering, "How do the swifts manage to sleep, especially if they're flying non-stop for 10 months?" Everybody needs their rest. Well, we're not exactly sure, but through studying these swifts with the electronic transmitters, it seems just before sundown they fly up to an elevation of about 2 miles and then they begin to glide slowly down, taking catnaps. Birds taking a catnap. Evidently, that's what they do. You might be wondering, "How do they eat without landing?"

You see, the swift has an almost perfect aerodynamic design. In fact, some aircraft designers have looked at the shape of the swift and used their design to pattern jet fighters because the swift is able to turn and maneuver so precisely in the air. So generally, right after sunrise and just before sundown, the birds go on a feast and they're able to grab the bugs right out of the air, having a great birdie-bug buffet.

Perhaps before you've wished that you could have that unending energy like these birds, be able to fly non-stop without getting bored or tired. You know, the Bible says that those that put their trust in God will never feel that kind of fatigue. Isaiah chapter 40, verse 31, "They that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not be weary. They will walk and not faint." So, friends, if you need an energy boost, surrender to Jesus and he'll help you mount up with wings like a bird.