

# Sharing Jesus With People Who Don't Know Him—Part 2



## SABBATH—DECEMBER 9

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Judges 3:1–6; Matthew 9:35–38; Matthew 15:22–28; Acts 10:9–16, 28, 34, 35; Matthew 8:10, 13.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Then Jesus answered, ‘Woman, you have great [much] faith! I will do what you asked me to do.’ And at that moment the woman’s daughter was healed” (Matthew 15:28, ICB).

In 2018, a report from the United Nations said that 55% of people on this earth live in cities.

**FROM THE START,** a loving God went looking for His lost children (Genesis 3:9). Today, this same loving God continues to save lost people (read Revelation 14:6–12), including the lost who live in cities. In 2018, a report from the United Nations said that 55% of people on this earth live in cities. This number will grow to 68% (if Jesus doesn't come) by 2050. We have no choice: we must share the Good News about Jesus with people in the cities.

Many of God's people act the same as Jonah when God asks them to do His work in a city. They run away from the task. “Everything written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures [the Old and New Testaments] give us strength to go on. They encourage us and give us hope” (Romans 15:4, NlrV). We must learn from Jonah's story, so we don't make his same mistakes.

When Jesus lived on this earth, He helped people in the cities of Israel and also in foreign lands.

This week, we will study the story about Jesus' work for the people in the cities of Tyre and Sidon. What can we learn from Jesus' work that can help us in our work today?

## WORKING FOR GOD IN FARAWAY PLACES (Judges 3:1–6)

We read that “Jesus left Galilee and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon” (Matthew 15:21, NIV). Why did Jesus take His followers from Galilee to these lands where people worshiped false gods? Jesus had important lessons He wanted to teach His followers. But He couldn’t teach His followers these lessons in Galilee. So, Jesus took His followers on a field trip to foreign lands where they could learn. Jesus wanted to teach His followers how to help Him save people in cities and faraway lands.

**Read Judges 3:1–6; 1 Kings 5:1–12; and 1 Kings 11:1–6. How do these verses help us understand a bit about the history of Tyre and Sidon?**

From Judges 3:1–6, we see that God gave His people experiences with Tyre and Sidon. For Israel, these experiences were the same as taking a test of faith. God’s people failed the test: “The Israelites began to marry the daughters of those people. And the Israelites allowed their daughters to marry the sons of those people. Israel served the gods of those people” (Judges 3:6, ICB). So, right from the start, the people from the lands around Israel caused Israel to sin.

In 1 Kings 5:1–11, we see that the Sidonians and the Hebrews were trading partners. For sure, this partnership was good business for both countries. At the same time, the partnership weakened Israel’s relationship with God.

1 Kings 11:1–6 shows us that Israel’s business partnership with Sidon caused much evil: Solomon married a Sidonian princess, who led him away from God. “Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth was the female god of the Sidonians. He also worshiped Molek. Molek was the god of the Ammonites. The Lord hated that god” (1 Kings 11:5, NIV).

Now that we know a bit more about Israel’s history with Sidon and Tyre, we may be surprised that Jesus brought His followers to these lands. Jesus wanted His followers to work to save the people in foreign cities. But first, the followers needed to understand that their dislike for these people was wrong.

**What can you do to support Adventists who work for God in the cities?**



**Jesus wanted His followers to work to save the people in foreign cities. But first, the followers needed to understand that their dislike for these people was wrong.**

## LOOKING FOR THE LOST IN THE CITIES (Matthew 9:35–38)

**Read Matthew 9:35–38. What do these verses teach us about the work we must do for God in cities and other places where lots of people live?**

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Wherever Jesus went, He felt love and pity for the crowds He met. Many of these people lived in big villages, towns, or cities. Luke 19:41 tells us that Jesus cried for Jerusalem. We may not understand how much Jesus loves His children in the cities. That’s why He asks us to pray for them. When we do, He will fill our hearts with love for them.

**When Jesus started His work for God on earth, people came to Him from different places. Where did they come from? Read the list in Matthew 4:23–25 for the answer.**



**We may not understand how much Jesus loves His children in the cities.**

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In Matthew 4:25, the people came from Galilee to follow Jesus. They also came from the city-states of the Decapolis to the east. They also came from Judea to the south. Notice they didn’t come from Samaria. What other area is missing from the list in Matthew 4:23–25? The answer is: the area of Tyre and Sidon, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This area was to the north and west of Galilee. Now we see why Jesus took His followers to this area! He wanted to teach His followers to go help the people in foreign lands who hadn’t come to Him.

“After Jesus’ experience with the spiritual leaders, He left Capernaum. Then He crossed Galilee and went to the hill country on the borders of Phoenicia. When Jesus looked to the west, He saw the old cities of Tyre and Sidon on the plain below Him. These cities were filled with temples to false gods. The cities also had beautiful palaces and markets filled with goods. Ships filled their harbors.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 399, adapted.

**How can we help people in the cities understand that their “beautiful palaces and markets filled with goods” are empty without Jesus in their lives?**

## IN TYRE AND SIDON (MATTHEW 15:22–28)

Bible thinkers believe that Matthew wrote his book about Jesus for a Jewish audience. Bible thinkers also believe that Mark wrote his book about Jesus mostly for non-Jewish readers. This information helps us when we read the Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

**Read Matthew 15:22–28 and Mark 7:24–30. Compare the two stories in Matthew and Mark about the woman. What is different about her in each story?**

Do you see how Matthew says the mother is a Canaanite? Mark uses other words to tell us about this woman. She is a Greek or a non-Jew. Then Mark gives us more information. The woman was born in the area of Syro-Phoenicia, which means she is a Syrian from the land of Phoenicia.

Think about how Matthew’s audience felt when they read the story in Matthew 15. Matthew’s audience was mostly Jewish. So, they thought Syro-Phoenicians were evil people who worshiped false gods. In the past, these people caused Israel to sin. So, the Jews in Jesus’ day didn’t like the Syro-Phoenicians very much. Jesus’ followers didn’t think that the woman had faith or was part of God’s kingdom!

Mark’s non-Jewish readers would have different feelings about the Syro-Phoenician woman when they read her story in Mark 7. The non-Jews didn’t have the same bad experience as the Jews did with the Syro-Phoenicians. So, Mark’s audience would feel excited when they read the story because Jesus healed someone who was one of them! To the non-Jews, the Syro-Phoenician woman was a beloved mother who cared about her daughter. The mother wanted Jesus to heal her child.

“Jesus didn’t answer the woman right away. He behaved the same as the Jews behaved around people they didn’t like. Jesus behaved this way because He wanted to teach His followers that they shouldn’t be cold and hard in their hearts to this woman. Then Jesus gave the woman what she asked for. Jesus showed mercy to her to teach His followers to help people who are suffering.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 400, adapted.

**Read 1 John 2:2. What does this verse tell us about how we are all the same in God’s eyes?**



**“Jesus didn’t answer the woman right away. He behaved the same as the Jews behaved around people they didn’t like.”**

**“SEND HER AWAY!” (Acts 10:9–16, 28, 34, 35)**

In the neighborhoods of the cities, many people long for hope. In Jesus’ day, what stopped God’s people from sharing His hope with the people in foreign cities? Pride and hatred for non-Jews made the Jews blind. They couldn’t see how much the people near to them needed the hope of Jesus’ first coming. Today, Jesus wants His people to share the hope of the Second Coming with many groups in the cities (Titus 2:13). Jesus didn’t worry about where people were born or where they lived. We should feel the same way as Jesus.



**Peter saw a tablecloth filled with animals and birds that weren’t clean.**

**Read Acts 10:9–16, 28, 34, 35. What lesson does the Holy Spirit teach us in these verses?**

While Peter waited for lunch, God gave him a vision or dream. Peter saw a tablecloth filled with animals and birds that weren’t clean. Three times in the vision God told Peter to get up and eat the animals. God used these dreams to show Peter that his heart was filled with religious pride and dislike for non-Jews. Peter learned an important Bible truth. He said, “ ‘I really understand now that to God every person is the same. God accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what country a person comes from’ ” (Acts 10:34, 35, ICB).

Now let’s go back to our story about Tyre and Sidon. What lessons can Peter’s words in Acts 10:34, 35 teach us about the story in Matthew 15:22–28 and Mark 7:24–30? Look again at Jesus and His conversation with the mother. What lessons did the followers learn from this field trip that Peter learned from his vision on the rooftop? How can these lessons help us as we work for Jesus in the cities? What dislikes fill our hearts that stop us from seeing the needs of people in the cities? What work has God given us to do in the cities around us? How can doing this work help us to empty our hearts of hate and spiritual pride?

Jesus was patient with His followers. They didn’t understand that God’s plan was for all humans everywhere. The Holy Spirit can help us empty our hearts of our dislike for other people. Then we can finish our work for God in the cities.

**How can we empty our hearts of hate and pride? Read Galatians 2:11–13 for the answer.**

**FAITH ON EARTH? (Matthew 8:10, 13)**

Jesus asks a question at the end of one of His picture stories: “ ‘But when the Son of Man comes, will he find people on earth who have faith?’ ” (Luke 18:8, NIV). What is Jesus looking for? The picture story in Luke 18 teaches us that Jesus wants people who believe in Him when times are hard and everything looks hopeless.

**Read Matthew 8:10, 13; Matthew 9:2; Matthew 20:29–34; Mark 2:5; Mark 10:46–52; and Luke 18:35–43. In these verses, who does Jesus say has faith?**

Jesus’ list includes people who had faith in cities. Their faith shined the same as a bright light during dark times. In Capernaum, Jesus talks about several people with faith. In Matthew 8:10, 13, we see a Roman soldier who has faith. We already studied about four faith-filled friends who rip open a roof to lower their sick friend to Jesus (Matthew 9:2; Mark 2:5). In Mark 10, we meet the blind man, Bartimaeus. After Jesus heals Bartimaeus, his faith shines the same as a bright light in the city of Jericho.

We expect much faith among God’s own people. Sad to say, the Bible says there was little faith and much doubt in places in Jesus’ day. People who lived in Nazareth, the town where Jesus grew up, didn’t have much faith. When we doubt God, we limit God’s blessings in our lives. Many times Jesus says to the Jews, “ ‘Your faith is so small!’ ” (Matthew 6:30, NIV; Matthew 8:26; Matthew 14:31; Matthew 16:8). In Matthew 17:17, Jesus says, “ ‘You people today have no faith’ ” (ERV).

One lesson we can learn today is that we can find faith in places we don’t expect to find it: in the hearts of foreigners who live in cities, in people who worship false gods, and in people from different religions. We need to enter the cities as Jesus did. We must look for the lost who will accept Jesus with saving faith. These people are waiting for our help.

**Task #1: Pray for more faith to share your love for Jesus with people near and far away.**

**Task #2: How did you come to know Jesus and His Three Angels’ Messages? Make a list of three spiritual blessings that Jesus gave you in your personal life. Share your list with your class on Sabbath.**



**After Jesus heals Bartimaeus, his faith shines the same as a bright light in the city of Jericho.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Many non-Jews had a better understanding of the Bible promises about the coming Savior than the Jewish teachers. Some of these non-Jews hoped for His coming to save them from sin. These thinkers wanted to learn more about the offerings the Jews made that showed Jesus’ saving work. But the Jews prevented these non-Jews from learning about this Bible truth.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 33, adapted.

“The Lord Jesus is our Mighty Savior. He died for men and women everywhere. Jesus can wake them up from spiritual sleep. He can fill their hearts with mercy and love. Jesus can soften their hearts. He can show them Bible truth. God is the Master Worker, and not man. At the same time, God chooses men to be His helpers. God wants workers who will share Bible truth with people who don’t know it. God has people who are loyal to Him in all the churches. These people are the same as jewels. So, we must not say terrible things about people from other religions. With love in our hearts, we must share the Bible truth about Jesus. Let other people see our love for God. Let them see that we are God’s children. Then they will want to learn more about Bible truth. . . . Show people Jesus in your life. He is the Savior of the human family.”—Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 17, 1893, adapted.



**“God wants workers who will share Bible truth with people who don’t know it.”**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What are some of the needs of people in the area where you live? How can you and your church meet these needs? How can you help meet the needs of people who don’t know the Bible truths that we know?
- ② Look at the Ellen G. White quote above about people from other faiths: “God has people who are loyal to Him in all the churches. These people are the same as jewels. So, we must not say terrible things about people from other religions.” How can we teach people that their beliefs and behaviors are not correct without putting these people down?
- ③ Jesus asked, “‘When the Son of Man comes, will he find people on earth who have faith?’ ” (Luke 18:8, NIV). What is Jesus really asking with this question? How are faith and belief different? What if people have correct beliefs but don’t have any faith? How can that happen?

## DREAMING DREAMS—PART 1

**16**-year-old Joseph Delamou was worried. He worried that he didn't belong to Jesus' true church. Joseph lived in Conakry, the capital city of the country of Guinea in West Africa. He prayed, "Show me the way, Lord. I'll go wherever You lead."

That night, Joseph had a dream. He dreamed that he and 70 members of his church were at a meeting. Joseph and his church members talked about ways to add more members to their church. Outside the building where they met, Joseph saw a castle that belonged to a mighty king. This king bragged that he controlled the whole earth. All of a sudden, a group of soldiers burst into the meeting. One of the soldiers told Joseph, "You need to leave and come with us. We want you to join our army."

Joseph didn't want to leave, but the soldier said he must. The soldier told Joseph, "Leave. You can't stay here. Go anywhere you want. Just don't stay here. After three days, you can come back and see what has happened to the people here."

Joseph left. Three days later, he came back. The building was empty. Joseph wondered where everyone was. Then he saw a boy hiding behind the wall of the king's castle. The boy bled. When Joseph tried to talk to him, the boy put a finger to his lips to tell him to be quiet. The boy whispered, "Come here."

Joseph came near. The boy said, "Your God is powerful!"

Joseph said, "What?" The boy answered, "I said, 'Your God is powerful!' How come you are the only person who left us three days ago? Many of us were shot and killed. You are the only one who escaped. How?"

The boy led Joseph to a pile of dirt. The boy said the dirt was the grave of more than 40 people. He told Joseph, "The soldiers didn't train anyone. They shot and killed people. Then they put the ones who didn't die in cages and took them away."

Joseph saw a snake lying still on the ground. The boy said the snake was the king who used to live in the castle. The boy said, "Come see the prince who is now in control."

Joseph couldn't take his eyes off the dead snake. "How did a snake make itself king of the whole earth? I don't understand how people accepted a snake as their king."

The boy said, "I can't explain this to you right now."

Then, Joseph woke up. He didn't understand everything in his dream. He knew the dream was a sign that God wanted him to leave his father's church. Where should he go?

Your 13th Sabbath Offering on December 30 will help church workers share the Good News about Jesus in West Africa, which includes Guinea. Thank you for planning to give a big offering. Read more about Joseph next week.

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



**Joseph couldn't take his eyes off the dead snake. "How did a snake make itself king of the whole earth? I don't understand how people accepted a snake as their king."**

