

Sharing Jesus



SABBATH—JUNE 13

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Matthew 28:18–20; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 3:8–15; Hosea 4:17; Zechariah 10.

MEMORY VERSE: “The Almighty LORD has given his message to me, his servant. I speak it on his behalf [for him]. I know what to say to help weak and tired people. The LORD wakes me up every morning so that I can learn something. I listen carefully to him, as a student listens to his teacher” (Isaiah 50:4, EASY).



Pastor G. hit the brakes. He held up his fist in anger and yelled at the driver.

SABBATH MORNING for Pastor G. was very busy. He woke up early. He got ready to teach Sabbath School and preach his sermon. Pastor G. also planned to preach at some Bible meetings in the afternoon. He grabbed his keys, ran out the door, and sped away.

Pastor G. drove through the city traffic. He was upset that so many people were out on a Saturday morning. They could make him late for church. He thought, “Where are all these people going anyway?” Then, out of nowhere, a car moved in front of him. Pastor G. hit the brakes. He held up his fist in anger and yelled at the driver.

Finally, Pastor G. arrived at church. As he stood up to teach the lesson, he looked at the faces of the people in his class. Then he saw the face of the driver he yelled at just 20 minutes earlier. The driver sat in his class!

Later, a church member introduced the driver to Pastor G. The driver was a non-Adventist who was visiting family. Pastor G. remembered that we need to be very careful to show God’s love in everything we say and do. You never know how your behavior can change the lives of other people.

WITNESSES FOR JESUS (Matthew 28:18–20)

Read Jesus' Important Command in Matthew 28:18–20 in the ERV, ICB, NirV, NLV, or WE Bibles. How many times does Jesus use the words “all” or “always” in these verses? (In the Greek language, the words “all” and “always” come from the same word ‘pas.’) What are the messages connected with these words?

Jesus gave us the command: “ ‘Go and make followers’ ” (Matthew 28:19, ERV). God gave the Seventh-day Adventist Church the job of making new followers for Jesus. Together, we all announce the Good News and the Three Angels' Messages (Revelation 14:6–12). These messages help people get ready for Jesus' soon coming!

Anyone who gets new life in Jesus is a witness. Too often, people think that sharing Jesus is something they can't do or don't want to do. You may have trouble seeing yourself preaching on a street corner or giving a Bible study. So, you say, “Not me! No way! I'm too shy.”

Sharing Jesus is talking about the things Jesus is doing in your life. What is He teaching you? Share your experience and knowledge with other people. God is so good. What He did for us and is doing is the best news that people can hear. We cannot and should not be afraid to share! God saved you. He knows your name. He invites you to accept His love and forgiveness. You are His. Can there be any better news for anyone anywhere?

Jesus' followers weren't educated in the popular schools of the day. But we can learn from His followers.

How did Christians in the New Testament church share Jesus? What did the people do who heard Peter and John preach? Read Acts 1:8 and Acts 4:13 for the answers.

Peter and John announced, “ ‘We must tell people about the things that we have seen and heard’ ” (Acts 4:20, EASY). “Peter and John had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13, ERV). So, they must tell people about Him. God's Spirit gave them courage and power to convince people.

Spend some time in prayer right now. Ask God for courage to share Him with the people He puts in your life. Ask Him for wisdom to know when to share and what to say. Read 1 John 4:7–11: pray for this love to be in your heart.



Sharing Jesus is talking about the things Jesus is doing in your life.

SHARING GOD IN LOVE (2 Peter 3:18)



Do you look at the faces
in a crowd and wonder
if they know Jesus?
Do you feel God's love
for strangers in need?

Do you wonder why Jesus kept working so hard day after day? The Bible tells us, "When Jesus saw the crowds of people, he felt sorry for them. They had trouble in their minds. They had nobody to help them. Jesus thought, 'These people are like [the same as] sheep that have nobody to take care of them' " (Matthew 9:36, EASY). Love and pity kept Jesus going. God's love should cause us to lead people to Jesus and Bible truth, too (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Do you look at strangers and wonder if they know Jesus? Do you feel God's love for strangers in need? God's love in us helps us to want to lead people to Him. Jeremiah talks about this Bible truth when he says, " 'Sometimes I think, "I will say nothing about the LORD or his message." But then his message burns like [the same as] a fire inside me. It [not sharing God's message] gives me pain in my mind and my body. I cannot keep his message to myself. I have to speak it' " (Jeremiah 20:9, EASY).

When we share God with people, we must not force them to accept God or Bible truth. Because God is love, He never forces anyone to love or serve Him. God didn't force Adam and Eve to stay away from the forbidden tree (Genesis 2:16, 17). God didn't force people to enter the ark to be saved from the Flood (Genesis 7:1). God didn't force the Israelites to keep the Promise (Deuteronomy 4:29–31). So, if God doesn't force people, what does He do for them? God met people's needs (Matthew 4:23–25). He invited people to follow Him. Jesus never forces anyone to follow Him or His truth. But He never gives up on us (Matthew 23:37).

As we share Jesus, we must do what He did. Ellen G. White says, "Jesus didn't force people to accept Him. Satan and his followers force people to do what they want. . . . What is the strongest proof that we have Satan's spirit? We show we have his spirit when we hurt people who don't agree with our ideas. We show his spirit when we destroy people who don't view our work with much favor."—*The Desire of Ages*, page 487, adapted.

We live in a time when people hate the truth. But that shouldn't stop us from sharing it in thoughtful and loving ways. Remember, our own personal story about Jesus is often the most powerful truth we can share (Revelation 12:11).

Read 2 Peter 3:18. How are you growing in God's love and knowledge? How do your relationships show that you are?

ADVICE FOR SHARING JESUS (1 Peter 3:8–15)

The question for each of us is: Are you sharing Jesus with anyone? The postman? A store clerk? Someone you see daily when you're out walking? God asks every Christian to help Him with this work. He promises to teach us "what to say. He has taught [us] how to help those who are tired" (Isaiah 50:4, NIV). As Christians, we always must be ready to give reasons for our faith and hope (1 Peter 3:15).

Read 1 Peter 3:8–15. What is the Bible telling us in these verses?

Below is some advice to help you share Jesus with other people:

- Get to know someone. Take the time to build a friendship. Show this person that you care. Your love and interest will help lead this person to God.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work on this person's heart. Pray for the right time to share about Jesus.
- Look for ways to talk about your own faith and experiences. Or offer a prayer for this person. Ask God to give you courage to do these things in a loving way.
- Think of ways to connect your new friend with people from your church. A special program or small group Bible study is a good way to do that.
- Pray about the special needs or questions your new friend may ask you. Show your friend how the Bible offers hope, advice, and support in our lives. At first, you may share a Bible promise. Or you may answer one of your friend's questions. Your answer or the Bible verse may start a deep conversation about Jesus. Pray for God to help these things to happen.
- The time will come when you may want to ask your friend to study the Bible with you. Later, your friend may wish to get baptized. Don't force the person to do these things. At the same time, don't wait too long to invite your friend to Bible study or get baptized if you see that this person is ready and interested.
- Our behavior should show who we are. The love and care we show other people can change lives for the better. When God's love fills our hearts, we will want to bring other people to Jesus.



Show your friend how the Bible offers hope, advice, and support in our lives.

A WANDERING CHILD (Hosea 4:17)

Many parents know the pain and the sorrow of having a child who rejects the Lord. The parents raised their children in strong, spiritual homes. But the children choose to leave their relationship with the Lord.

Ephraim is a symbol in the book of Hosea for God’s chosen people in the northern kingdom of Israel. Ephraim wanders away from God. What do Hosea 4:17 and Hosea 7 tell us about Ephraim’s sins?

The Bible tells us that Rachel cries because Ephraim rejects his relationship with the Lord (Jeremiah 31:15). (Remember, in the book of Genesis, Rachel is the real grandmother of Ephraim.) So, Jeremiah uses Rachel as a symbol to show that God’s loyal people feel sad when many of His children are carried away from their land for rejecting God. The Lord tells ‘Rachel’ to “ ‘stop crying. Don’t let your eyes fill with tears. You will be rewarded for your work!’ says the Lord. ‘The people will come back from their enemy’s land. So there is hope for you!’ says the Lord. ‘Your children will come back to their own land’ ” (Jeremiah 31:16, 17, ICB).



The Bible tells us that Rachel cries because Ephraim rejects his relationship with the Lord (Jeremiah 31:15).

God tells Rachel not to weep. He tells her to have hope. What else does Jeremiah 31 tell us? Look at verses 18 and 19.

The Bible teaches us that there is hope for Ephraim. So, there is hope for our children, too. God doesn’t give up. Again and again, God punishes and scolds His people when they sin. But God doesn’t stop loving them. His message of love and forgiveness continues (read Jeremiah 31:20).

We may feel pain when the people we love reject the Lord. God always remembers His lost children. God continues to care for them, even when they stop following Him. God wants them to come back to Him. He wants to forgive them.

Rachel is sad when Ephraim stops following God. But God gives Rachel hope in her pain and suffering. How does God’s message to Rachel give you hope for the people who reject a relationship with God? How do God’s words encourage you?

BRING THEM BACK! (Zechariah 10)

At times, we are weak in our relationship with God. There are times when we are lukewarm. Or our heart isn't always loyal to God. What brought you back to a living relationship with Him?

Zechariah 10 shares some beautiful messages about God. These messages talk about how God brings His people back to Him. Read this chapter now slowly. What are its most important messages?

How do we talk with loved ones who no longer follow the Lord? You may wonder what went wrong. You may ask yourself how you should talk with them now. Maybe you feel helpless about the poor decisions they are making now. These thoughts are very powerful and can change how we feel about our loved ones. So, our words and behavior must be filled with God's love. We get this love from spending personal time with Him.

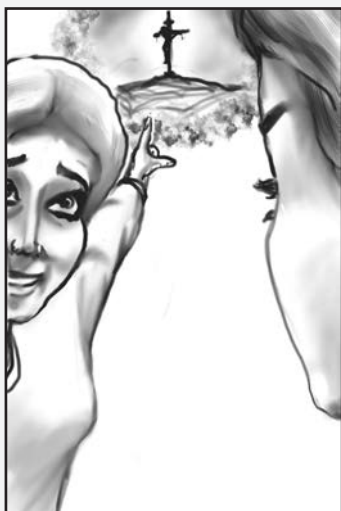
Your behavior, your story about Jesus, and your prayers for your lost loved ones can change their lives and their future for the better. (Read in Luke 22:31, 32 and John 21:15–17 how Jesus' prayers for Peter changed his future.) Give to God your sad feelings. Give Him your anger and any blame you may feel. Ask God to replace these feelings with love that only He can give. Ask God to forgive you and put His holy life of obedience on you, the same as clothes. Then you can be a loving example of Jesus. Jesus was not selfish. Remember, "a life that isn't selfish is very powerful. A loving and lovable Christian is the strongest proof for the Good News about Jesus."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 470, adapted.

Our example of a holy Christian life will show Jesus to other people. When we live a holy life, people who are lost will see something in us that comes only from God. These people will see peace, love, and hope in us. This peace is something that no human mind can fully understand. This love will never let go of them because it comes from God. This hope will not give up, even when times are hard. God's love for us and our lost loved ones always stays strong. Every day, we can get this love from God. Then we can give this love to the people around us.

What does Ephesians 3:17–19 encourage us to do?



When we live a holy life, people who are lost will see something in us that comes only from God.



“Do you want to feel the joy that comes from seeing people saved? You must work with Jesus to help Him save the people He died for on the cross.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Do you want to have real love for God? Then you must first love your brother or sister in Jesus. Your love must come from a heart that isn’t selfish. How do we get this spirit? We can try to love other people in our strength, but that won’t work. We need the love of Jesus in our hearts. When we live in Jesus, our hearts will be filled with love for other people.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 384, adapted.

“Do you want a strong spiritual life? Then work for the Lord. Win people to Jesus.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, page 356, adapted.

“Do you want strength to say no to evil? Then serve God with all your heart and might.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 105, adapted.

“Do you want to feel the joy that comes from seeing people saved? You must work with Jesus to help Him save the people He died for on the cross.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 142, adapted.

“Don’t reject the fellowship with Jesus that you get from working with Him. This work is our special training. This training helps get us ready to live with Jesus forever.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 264, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why is love so important for sharing Jesus with other people?
- ② Winning people to Jesus is connected to a personal and healthy relationship with God. How does your own experience show that this idea is true?
- ③ What basic understanding of God do you need to have to share Him with other people?
- ④ What if you wanted to give a Bible study to someone who doesn’t believe in Jesus. Where do you start? What is more important at first: proving Bible truth or inviting someone to know Jesus?
- ⑤ Sing or read the words from the hymn “Redeemed!” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 338). Think about the ways that you are living and sharing the message of this song.

STRANGER IN THE PARKING LOT

People ask Zeth Louis Lekatompessy how he supports his wife and three children without a paying job. Zeth says God gives him and his family everything they need.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed Zeth that he needed to trust more in God and less in himself. So, Zeth decided to volunteer as a Bible worker. Zeth loved leading people to Jesus. Zeth made a plan to lead his family to the Lord. Then Zeth decided to use that same plan to help other people accept the Lord, too.

Zeth and his wife made a list of every person they knew on Ambon Island where they lived. Every day Zeth and his wife prayed for the names on the list. They also got on their motorcycle every morning and visited the people on the list. During the visits, many people asked to study the Bible with Zeth and his wife. Later, many of these people got baptized.

Zeth and his wife visited about three families a day. They talked about the Bible. Sometimes their conversations continued until late at night.

Zeth wasn't paid for his work. So, many people didn't understand how the family could afford to live.

Someone asked Zeth, "How do you live without any pay, savings, or land that you can sell for money?"

Someone else asked Zeth, "How can you support your family without a job that pays money? I can't believe you're really doing it. Prove it!"

For sure, Zeth says that his family often suffers hard times. He remembers when their money ran out on a Friday. Zeth and his wife prayed to God for help. They kept praying all during the Sabbath. They said, "Lord, we don't have anything but You. We can trust only in You."

That Sabbath, a stranger approached Zeth in the church parking lot and gave him an envelope. The man said, "This gift will help you joyfully continue your work for God."

At home, Zeth and his wife thanked God and opened the envelope. Inside they found enough money to take care of their needs for many months to come!

Zeth says that he has hundreds of more stories that are proof of God's loving care. This story is only one of them!

Today, Zeth is studying religion at Klabat University. He hopes to learn how to give better Bible studies. Zeth said God continues to take care of his family's living expenses. When he finishes school, he wants to serve as a pastor or Bible worker. Or wherever else God leads him to serve.

Zeth said, "Pray for me and my family. Pray that when I finish my studies, I can lead more people to God's kingdom."

Watch a YouTube show about Zeth at: bit.ly/Zeth-IS.

INSIDE *Story*



"This gift will help you joyfully continue your work for God."



Zeth Louis Lekatompessy