



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

OPENED OR CLOSED?

To-day we are going to study, and meditate on, Luke chapter 24, the opening chapter of Luke's Gospel. I call it the OPENING chapter because in this chapter so many things are OPENED for the first time.

► **OPENED TOMB** "They found the stone rolled away from the tomb" (verse 2).

We, as believers, praise God for the OPENED tomb, and that we love and serve a living Saviour.

► **OPENED EYES** "Their eyes were OPENED, and they knew Him" (verse 31) They had walked with Him along the road but had not known that it was the Lord Jesus. We, as believers, experience difficult times in our lives, and we don't understand why, just like these two disciples. But the Lord Jesus wants to OPEN our eyes so that we might focus on Him and not the problem.

► **OPENED SCRIPTURES** "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us, and while He OPENED the Scriptures to us" (verse 32)

The Lord Jesus continues to speak to us to-day through His Word. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, He wants to open our eyes, so that we will see what He is saying in the Scriptures, especially to see the truths concerning Himself.

► **OPENED UNDERSTANDING** "Then OPENED He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." (verse 45)

There is so much in the Bible that we don't understand. The Lord Jesus wants us not only to read His Word but to understand what is written there. He especially wants us to understand what the Scriptures record about Himself and His work.

► **OPENED WORLD** "Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among ALL nations." (verse 47)

He had a ministry for His disciples. He commanded and called them to go to ALL nations with the message of repentance and remission. He OPENED the world to them for that ministry. And it is open for us also.

► **OPENED HEAVEN** "He was parted from them and carried into heaven." (verse 51)

Heaven was OPENED before their eyes as their Lord and Saviour was taken from them. But, at the same time, heaven was opened for themselves and all believers. He through His life and His sacrifice on the cross has opened heaven for all who put their trust in Him and follow Him.



We welcome you to this issue of Mini Mag with the challenging words of a poem by an unknown author.

The story of four candles

Just see how short THIS CANDLE is, this candle that I hold. It represents a MAN who found the Lord when he was old And though his light is shining now, and bright beyond a doubt. He hasn't much to give. because his light will soon be out.

THIS CANDLE that I have will burn much longer than the other. I love its glowing light, don't you? It represents a MOTHER Who found the Lord in middle age, her children were all grown If only she had known the Lord, when they were still at home.

THIS CANDLE is a longer one. It represents a YOUTH Who gave his heart to God and walks the path of right and truth His light can shine out long and bright, with many trophies won With more to give, because he found the Lord when he was young.

THIS CANDLE is the longest one. I'm sure you'll like it best Because you know 'twill shed its light much longer than the rest It represents a LITTLE CHILD who heard the call and came With many years to serve the Lord, and shine in Jesus' Name.

We pray that we, as believers, are not CLOSED in any of the above situations. How important it is for us to see an OPEN tomb, to see the Saviour at all times with OPENED eyes, to have the Word of God OPENED to us in a new way, to have an OPENED understanding concerning Christ in the Scriptures, to do what God wants us to do in reaching an OPENED world with the gospel, and to look forward to the day when the heavens will be OPENED for our homecoming.

In all 48 issues of Mini Mag we have been studying, in this section, what the Bible teaches about children. We recognise that the Word of God is, by far, the most important source of our knowledge concerning children and must always have priority in our ministry to them. We started by studying the main passages about children in great detail. (Deuteronomy chapters 4,6,11, and 31, Psalm 78:1-8 Matthew 18:1-14; Mark 10:13-16) We then went through the Old Testament and found twenty-five additional verses or passages where we could learn something about children. Last month we started to look for additional verses or passages in the New Testament with reference to children and our ministry to them, and we found five more of them. You can find the Bible references to all of these verses and passages and the lessons learned from them by downloading past issues of Mini Mag. In this month's issue we will continue to look for such verses and passages in the New Testament, and we will especially find from them WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO. It would help if you could read these verses in your Bible.

● **Matthew 11:25,26 Yes, they can understand the Word of God.** In these two verses we read that the "wise and prudent" are so "clever" that their minds are closed to God's revelation. God, instead, reveals His truth to those who are open to it, willing to believe it and respond to it. He calls them "babes" (Brepheos). This

means that little children are open to the Word of God and that God enables them to respond to it. This is also true of adults who are willing to "become little children." (See Matthew 18:3, 19:14) Let us not doubt that God gives children the ability to understand what He says and to trust the Lord Jesus.

● **Matthew 21:15,16. Yes, they can praise the Lord.** The religious leaders were angry at the children who were praising the Lord Jesus, and they complained about the children to Him. But He gladly accepted their praise, and reminded the critics that the children's praise was a fulfilment of the promise in Psalm 8:2. Indeed these verses show that the children's praise was a source of comfort and strength to the Saviour. Let us be sure to encourage our children to praise the Lord Jesus.

● **2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14,15 Yes, they can understand and praise, but they need us to help them do so.** Timothy is an example of someone who knew the holy Scriptures from childhood (BREPHEOS). Why? He had a godly mother and grandmother who did not say "He's too young" but instead taught him the Holy Scriptures from he was a baby. By doing this, they laid the foundation for his later conversion and his ministry. Let us start teaching our children when they are really young. They need our help and we must start early and follow the example of Lois and Eunice.



KEY QUESTIONS ASKED

BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: How can I know if a child is saved? What changes should I expect to see in the life of a child who has trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour?

Answer: Firstly. You need to understand THREE BASIC FACTS AND WARNINGS

1) **BIBLICAL FACTS TO UNDERSTAND**, The Bible makes it clear that there WILL BE a change in the life of EVERYONE who trusts Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks about the result of salvation as a new birth (John 3:3-8), as a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17) and a new way of thinking (Roman 8:5-8, 12:2). And the Bible also makes it clear that the faith which brings salvation is not real or alive unless it produces works and fruit. (James 2:17-26)

2) **WARNINGS TO HEED** You need to be careful and patient. The scale, depth, speed and manner of such changes can, and usually do, change from child to child. In some children there is a marked and swift change; but for many the change is slow and sometimes almost imperceptible. The latter is especially true for children born into a Christian home. You must be careful, also, not to decide the standards which the child must reach before we accept that he is born again. Be thankful for ANY changes. A child, for example, could show changes in his lifestyle, yet, for some reason, not want to go to Sunday School.

3) **DANGERS TO AVOID**. The greatest danger for most of us is that we expect too much too soon from the child who has trusted Christ, and, as a result, we are disappointed if we continue to see

sin and disobedience in his life. You need to remember that sanctification is a slow process and you need to be PATIENT. Children who trust Christ do not "become angels" overnight. Growth always takes time.

Secondly. You need to recognise THREE EVIDENCES to look for in the saved child. (Remember to be patient)

1) **CHANGES IN HIS LIFE** be they ever so little. A change of life seems to be the primary evidence of salvation which is displayed in the Scriptures.

2) **A LOVE FOR THE LORD JESUS**, especially as you teach the children and show them how much He suffered for them and for their salvation. The saved child's heart will be touched.

3) **A LOVE FOR THE BIBLE** This will develop as you teach the Bible and as you show the children how important it is for them to read this letter from God and be helped by it.

Thirdly. You need to recognise the important part you need to play in feeding these spiritual "babies" and in helping them to grow and display these evidences of a new life. They do need help.

> You need to teach them about the change which has taken place and what God expects from them.

> You need to teach them that these changes can be strengthened by the Holy Spirit Who lives in them.

> You need to teach them what to do when they sin so that they do not become discouraged.

TEACH THEM TO PRAY PART 2

(Sample outline) “I would like to speak especially to you boys and girls who have asked the Lord Jesus to be your Saviour. When you did that, God made you a new person. The Bible says you were born again. You had a second birthday. You are a new person, but you are not a perfect person. You are really a baby---a spiritual baby—and like all babies you need to grow. Babies have to learn how to walk, how to eat and how to talk. As a spiritual baby you need to learn how to walk (how to live a life which pleases the Lord Jesus), how to eat spiritual food, and how to talk to God. As you do these things you will grow as a Christian. In recent weeks we have been learning how to walk or live in a way which pleases God, by having victory over sin in our lives. This week we want to learn how to talk to God, and as we talk to Him, we will grow. God is your Father. He wants you, His children, to pray to Him or speak to Him. If you do, He will bless you, He will strengthen you, He will solve your problems and you will grow. I would like to show you how to pray.



➤ You should plan to have a short time at home each day (perhaps before breakfast, or in the afternoon when you come home from school) when you can be quiet and talk to your

Heavenly Father. But you can also talk to God anywhere and at any time when you have a special and urgent need.

➤ Speak in your usual voice, out loud if you are alone, or quietly in your heart if others are present.

➤ Here are four little sentences which will help you know what to say when you pray.

● **I THANK YOU FATHER** for my good health, or for helping me pass my exam, or for my Mum and Dad or....

● **I AM SORRY FATHER** that I lost my temper or that I told a lie to my parents or that I said that bad word... Please forgive me.

● **I ASK YOU FATHER** to save my friend Todd or that my dad will get a good job, or that you will help me live for you...

● **I LOVE YOU FATHER** and your Son the Lord Jesus You are a great and wonderful God.

➤ God WILL ANSWER your prayers. He has promised to do so. He will answer them in one of three ways:

* Sometimes His answer is “Yes” if it is His will and it is best for you.

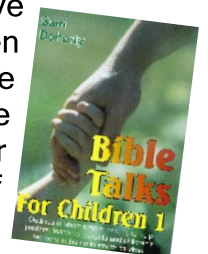
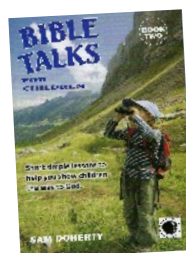
* Sometimes His answer is “No” if it is not His will and if it is not best for you.

* Sometimes His answer is “Wait” if the time for it is not right.

These three answers remind us of the three traffic lights –red, amber and green. (stop, wait and go)

HELP!
**YOU WILL FIND HELP
IN THESE ACEW
PUBLICATIONS**

Are there times when you, as a pastor or a teacher or a parent or a children’s worker, have opportunities to give short talks to children in the church or in the school or in the home, or even in the open-air? We have written two books entitled “Bible Talks for Children 1 & 2” each of which contains almost 200 short talks with simple



easily available visuals. Some of these talks are aimed at unsaved children, some at saved children but most of them are suitable for all children. I believe that you would find this book very helpful. You can

download them from our website at www.cefbookministry.com



ILLUSTRATIONS TO USE WITH ALL CHILDREN

1) A missionary in Canada was speaking to a group of Indians about the Lord Jesus. He taught them about His love, and how He left heaven and came to our earth to save us. The old chief of the Indians listened carefully and then he arose and came forward with his blanket, laid it at the missionary's feet and said "Indian chief give his blanket to the Lord Jesus".

The missionary continued to talk about the Lord Jesus and how He loved the children, how He healed those people who were sick and how He raised people from the dead. The old man came again to the missionary, knelt before him with his tomahawk (axe) and said, "I give my tomahawk to the Lord Jesus."

The missionary went on speaking about how people said nasty things about the Lord Jesus and criticised Him when He was helping and healing so many people. The Indian Chief was deeply moved. He went out and returned leading his pony and said to the missionary "I give my pony to the Lord Jesus".

Then, at the end, the missionary told how the Lord Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for our sin, because He loved us so much. The old man, with the tears streaming down his face, fell on his knees before the missionary crying "Indian chief give himself to the Lord Jesus."

And that is exactly what God wants from you and me.

2) Some years ago, a boy made a model yacht. He was so proud of it. He loved to take it down to the lake or a nearby river, sail it there and say to the other boys "Do you see that yacht. It's mine. I made it myself." But one day his boat floated far from him down the river and he lost it. He was so sad. He had lost the beautiful boat which he had made. One day, several weeks later, he was walking past a shop in the town where he lived and he saw his yacht in the shop window. He went into the shop, and he told the shopkeeper that the yacht was his because he had made it, and that he had lost it. "No," said the shopkeeper, "It's mine. I bought it from a man two days ago. He found it on the riverbank. If you want it, you will have to pay for it."

The boy went home and started to save his money so he could buy his boat. At last, he had enough money to do so, and he ran back to the shop and bought his boat. As he walked home, he clutched his boat tightly to his chest and said "You're twice mine. You are mine because I made you, and you are mine because I bought you."

When any boy or girl, anywhere in the world, trusts the Lord Jesus as their Lord and Saviour they belong to Him twice over. If you have trusted Him, He looks at you and says "You are twice mine. You are mine because I made you and you are mine because I bought you when I died for you and your sin on the cross."

Trust Him to-day if you have not done so.

74 Years and Still Learning:

The author's experience and the lesson he learned

A number of years ago I had the opportunity to visit Child Evangelism Fellowship in Brazil. and I spent some time speaking to, and teaching, the Brazilian full-time CEF workers by interpretation. One morning I came into the room where the meetings were held. All the workers were in place and ready for my teaching. I was walking towards the platform where I would stand and teach, when I saw, to my surprise, that my teaching position was already occupied. There was someone there, standing beside my interpreter, who was already in place and ready to start translating me. Who could it be? It was a full sized "dummy" or model of myself expertly dressed in some of my clothes which must have been "borrowed" by the Brazilians for the occasion. It was a real work of art, and probably looked better than I did! The workers were all watching me to see what my reaction would be. I thought it was hilarious. I really enjoyed what they had done, and I

THE JOKE'S ON ME

burst into laughter and everyone cheered Then we got on with the teaching.

Afterwards I spent some time trying to think of a way that I could get my own back on them. That evening I spoke with my interpreter and got him to teach me some simple sentences in Portuguese. When we went into class the next morning, I stood up on the platform and started to teach in Portuguese, with my translator interpreting my sentences into English. It was some time before the Brazilians realized what was happening and that they were taking down notes from my Portuguese. When they realised what was happening, both they and I roared with laughter. Then we got down to teaching and learning.

The lesson I learned from this experience, and many other earlier experiences, is that it is so important for children's workers to have A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOUR. You will be lost without it.

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Administrator of the ACEW Trust, and Kenneth Martin, Chairman of the ACEW Trust.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's over 70 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at www.CEFBookMinistry.com.

Copyright © 2024 - All rights reserved Permission is given to CEF workers to copy and distribute free of charge.