

# Treasures of the Kingdom

Casting Up a Highway for the Children of This Generation

## Is Yours the Kingdom of Heaven?

Are you poor  
and needy for what  
God has?



**Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!**  
- Matthew 5:3

God has so much for us -  
if we will come to Him with all  
of our problems, weakness,  
and desires.



Or will you  
trust in your  
own riches  
to make you  
happy?  
Mark 10:24



Are you  
digging for the  
treasure that  
God has for  
you?



**The kingdom of heaven is like unto  
treasure hid in a field...**  
- Matthew 13:44

Usually the treasure is buried in our  
problems. When we thank God that He will  
work everything for our good, we can start  
digging. Just don't give up!

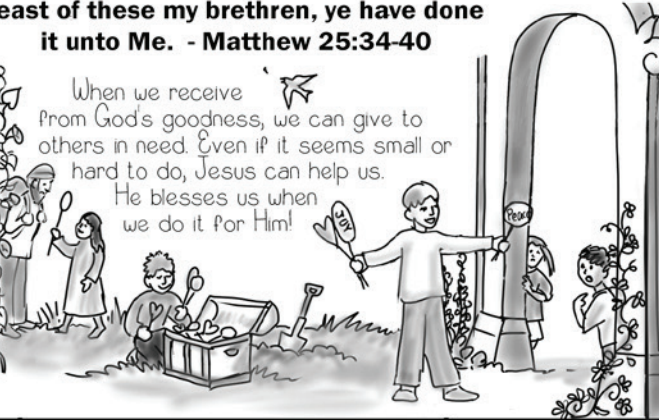


But if you  
just want  
things to be  
fun and easy,  
and hold on  
to your  
own way...  
2 Tim. 3:2



**Come...inherit the kingdom prepared for you.... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the  
least of these my brethren, ye have done  
it unto Me. - Matthew 25:34-40**

When we receive  
from God's goodness, we can give to  
others in need. Even if it seems small or  
hard to do, Jesus can help us.  
He blesses us when  
we do it for Him!



If you try  
to depend  
yourself and  
your stuff,  
you'll end up  
losing it.  
Matt. 6:19  
Mark 8:35



# Picture It! God's Kingdom

What is God's Kingdom like? How can we be part of it? On the front cover are three examples that Jesus gave us. He talked a lot about God's kingdom because it was important to Him. He wanted us to understand it, so he used picture-stories, called parables, to explain it to us.

Have you ever...

Planted seeds?



Baked bread?



Hunted for treasure?



Gone fishing?



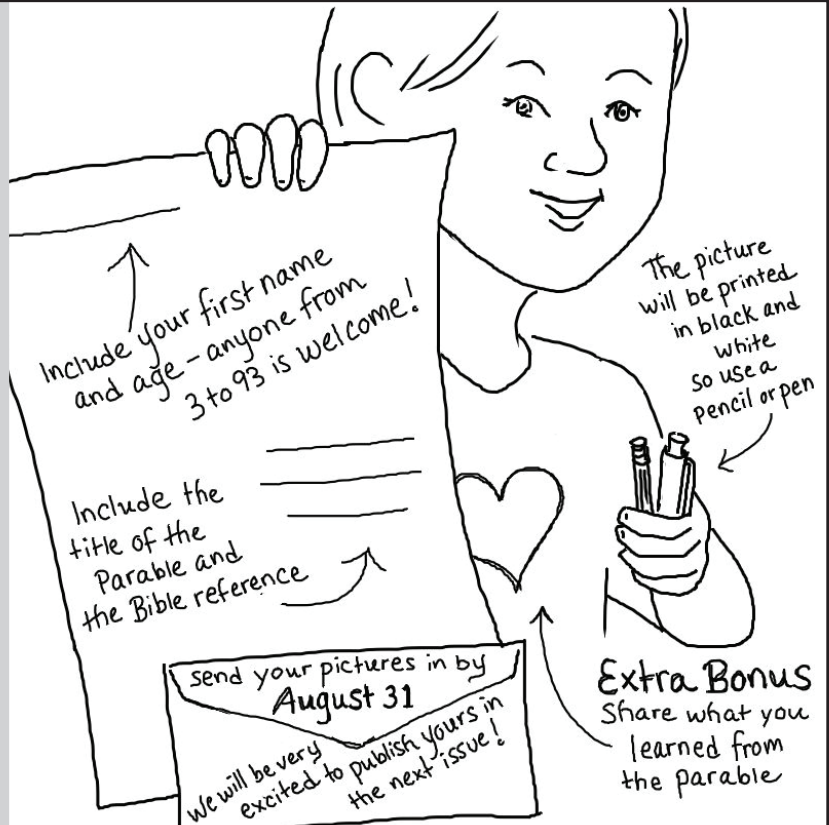
Jesus used these story examples (see Matthew 13), and many more, to show us what the Kingdom of heaven is like. They may sound like common subjects, but each parable reveals a secret about God. Are you one of those that really want to know God and His plans for us? Then these secrets are for you! Reading the Gospels is a good place to start.

Pictures often help us understand things better.

For the next issue, I would like to print some more pictures of the Kingdom that Jesus talked about.

But I need your help. Are you ready for a **CHALLENGE?**

Draw a picture of one of the parables and send it to us!



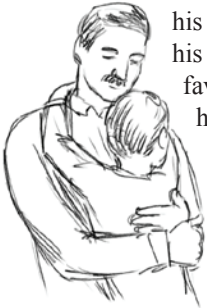
# Nothing to Be ASHAMED of?

“Where is my Misha?” Papa asked as he came through the door.

The six-year-old boy giggled as he huddled on the cot in the tiny living room. It was fun to hide when Papa was looking for him.

“What is that?” Papa pretended to be puzzled. “What was that noise I heard? Was it a little mouse?” Misha hid his face and squealed in delight as he heard Papa’s footsteps coming closer.

Suddenly Misha felt himself lifted up in his father’s strong arms and hugged tightly to his chest. Misha threw his arms around his neck, hugging him back. This was his favorite part of the day, when Papa came home from his night shift at the big electronics factory in Leningrad.



“Let’s go for a walk!” Misha begged, pulling on Papa’s arm as soon as he stood on the floor again. “Please, Papa! I want to go outside!” Misha did not think of how tired

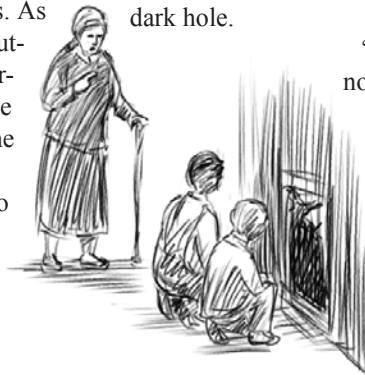
Papa must have been, working all night and climbing the four flights of stairs to the tiny apartment. He was just an energetic boy, and he wanted to go outside. The bright sunlight streaming through the windows called to him.

“Where shall we go?” Papa asked, smiling. He did not act tired.

Eagerly, Misha led the way down the flights of stairs, his shoes clumping on the concrete steps. As they pushed open the hall door and stepped outside, he fairly danced with joy. The breezes carried the scent of saltwater from the harbor. The summer sunshine was warm, yet not hot. And the street was filled with people.

“Where shall we go?” Papa asked again. “To the fountain?”

“Yes!” Misha replied. Just a short distance away a small fountain splashed in the middle of a courtyard. It was one of his favorite spots.

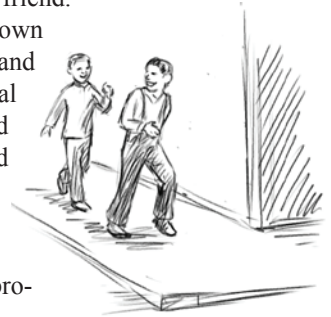


“Misha! Hey, Misha! Come here!”

A neighbor boy called from across the street.

Misha turned and saw Vova’s mischievous, laughing face. “Hey!” he yelled back. Without another thought, he dropped his father’s hand and ran across the street to join his friend.

Vova started running down the sidewalk, laughing and shouting. He was several years older than Misha, and full of adventure. Around the corner of a building and into a narrow alley he ran. Then Vova stopped and knelt down beside a broken basement window.



“Crazy!” Vova yelled into the black hole. “...zee!” the echo bounced back.

Misha liked the sound. “Crazy!” he yelled, joining Vova. He laughed as the echo mocked his voice.

“You are a drunkard!” Vova yelled, and both boys laughed in delight as the echo picked up the last word.

Vova and Misha kept yelling all the words they could think of. Vova even used words that Misha had never heard of before. But it was easy to copy him and to hear the same sounds echo inside the dark hole.

“You boys! Stop that noise!” An old woman, hobbling along the street, scolded them. “Get away from here!”

The boys sprang to their feet and Vova stuck his tongue out at the old woman. Misha did not dare follow that

example, for his parents had punished him for doing it at home. Instead he followed Vova into the main street again.

Up ahead he could see Sasha, the blind man, sitting in his usual place on his doorstep. He played a lively tune on his accordion, hoping for someone to take pity on him and throw a kopek or two into the basket beside him.

“Misha,” Vova whispered as they came closer, “I have an idea.” He dug into his pants pocket and came up with a three-kopek coin. “Do you want some candy?”

Misha looked at his friend in wonder. Candy! He nodded eagerly.

“When we get in front of old Sasha, throw this kopek into his basket. As soon as it jingles onto the other coins, grab a fifty-kopek coin from the basket. We will use that to buy candy!”



Misha did not think whether it was wrong or not. He was ready to do anything Vova suggested. He looked eagerly into the basket and spotted the coin he wanted. Then he threw Vova's coin into the basket and grabbed the fifty-kopek piece. Misha shoved it into his pocket. Sasha could not see what had happened, and continued playing his music. Misha glanced around, but no one seemed to have noticed.



Fifty kopeks bought quite a bit of candy. Misha knew the kind he wanted. Mints. How much he enjoyed sucking on the little hard sweets! This was a rare treat. Putting the rest of the mints in his pocket, Misha followed his friend home from the candy shop.

“Misha!” He heard Papa calling when they got close to the fountain. Misha looked toward his apartment building. There was Papa standing in front of the door. “Come, Misha! It's time to go in to eat.” Misha ran across the street and took his father's hand. Together they went up the four flights of stairs.

After eating, Papa took Misha on his lap and told him a story from the Bible. Misha liked the stories Papa told, because he made them inter-

esting. Today he told about Joseph and how he was put in prison for something he had not done. Then, one day, he was called before the great king of Egypt. The king had had a strange dream and wanted to know what it meant.

“Why do you think Joseph was not afraid of being brought to the king's palace?” Papa asked.

“Because God was with him?” Misha asked.

His father nodded, “Yes, because God was with him. Joseph knew that he had not done anything to be ashamed of toward anyone, not even the king.” Papa looked at Misha. “What about you, my son? Do you have anything that you are ashamed of? Something that you did or said?”

Misha thought of what he had done with Vova, and quickly shook his head. He did not want to be in trouble.

Papa continued talking. “The reason Joseph could talk to anyone was because he knew he had not done anything that was wrong or shameful. He had what we call a clear conscience.” He looked at Misha. “Do you know what a conscience is?”

Misha shook his head. For some reason, that word bothered him. What was a conscience?

“A conscience is something inside you that tells you if you have done something bad. It reminds us of things we have done that we should not have done.”

Misha understood. Yes, his conscience was talking to him.

Papa was continuing the story. “When Joseph was in prison, do you remember how he helped another prisoner who was a butler? Later the butler told the king about Joseph and that is why the king let him free. We need to be kind like Joseph was to the butler. Do you know of anyone you can be kind to? Someone poor?”

Misha wiggled on Papa's lap and shook his head.



“You can be kind to the blind man, Sasha, on the street. He cannot see, and he needs people to help him. He cannot work and is very poor.



Did you ever give Sasha a kopek? Even a small coin can help him.”

Why was Papa talking about Sasha? Misha squirmed uncomfortably.

“Here is a ten-kopek coin,” Papa said, handing the money to Misha. “Put it into your pocket. Next time you see Sasha, put it into his basket. That way you can be kind to someone, just like Joseph in the story.”

Misha nodded and quietly put the coin in his pocket.

“I smell mint,” Papa said, looking at him curiously.

“Oh, that is the candy Vova gave me,” Misha said, pulling candy out of his pocket.

“Oh! Did Vova give you candy?” Papa’s voice sounded surprised, and he reached into his own pocket again. “It is not good to take advantage of our friends. The next time you see Vova, give him this coin to pay him back.”

One more time Papa asked Misha, “Do you have anything you are ashamed of? Remember, Joseph could stand before anyone without fear, because he was not ashamed of anything he had ever done.”

Misha’s conscience was pricking him, but he shook his head quickly.

Papa sighed. “Sonny, when you left me to go with Vova, I watched you as you ran down the sidewalk.”

Misha felt a prickle go up his spine. Papa had seen him?

“I heard you yell bad words into the broken basement window. I was ashamed of the words that you used. Those words were bad words,” Papa said slowly and sadly. “Then I saw you take the coin out of Sasha’s basket. I was not far behind you, for I wanted to see what you and Vova were doing in your play. I saw Vova buying candy with the stolen money.”

Papa stroked Misha’s hair and his voice trembled a little.

“Misha, this makes me very sad. You thought you were having fun. But all of this was wrong. You have done something that you need to be ashamed of.”

Misha heard the sadness in his father’s voice as his hand kept stroking his hair. The prick in his con-

science turned into pain inside his chest. Tears trickled down Misha’s face.

“Your mother and I have tried to teach you to be kind and good. I see that we have not yet taught you. This makes me sad, not only because of the damage it does to you, but also for what you have done to poor Sasha.”

Misha put his head on his father’s chest and cried. Papa hugged him closely.

“Misha, do you want to do something that will help you feel better?”

Misha nodded his head. Yes!

“Take two fifty-kopek pieces and put them in Sasha’s basket. Tell him that you are sorry you have stolen from him.”

One hundred kopeks. A whole ruble! Misha knew his family didn’t have much money. But Papa was not going to skimp when it was time to make things right.

Misha took the two coins from Papa and darted out the door, wiping his wet eyes on his sleeves. He clattered down the steps once more, then pushed the outer door open and went out into the street. He ran down the sidewalk.

Sasha was still sitting in the same place. For the first time, Misha looked at the old man closely. His face was weary. Even as he played merry tunes on the accordion, a feeling of sadness hung over him. His clothes were ragged and dirty. When he paused in his playing, Misha went up to him.

“Sorry I stole from you,” he mumbled, and threw the two coins into Sasha’s basket. Misha turned and ran back home. How different he felt now! The heaviness inside was gone and he felt like he was flying!

Before he dashed into the apartment building again, Misha looked up to the fourth floor. He could see Papa’s face in the window, watching for him.

Waving his hand happily, he shouted, “I am coming, Papa! I am coming home!”

*From A Small Price to Pay by Harvey Yoder – highly recommended.*

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# Think About It: *Our Father's Faithful Love*

Did you like the story of Misha and his father? I did, and that is why I wanted to share it with you. Did you notice how Papa loved Misha and wanted to spend time with him, even when he was tired? Misha loved his papa, too—but sometimes other things were more exciting. Like running down the street with his friend, Vova. The problem was that Vova wasn't a faithful friend. He led Misha into doing wrong things—things that Misha needed to be ashamed of. Do you remember what they were?

Papa's love showed by his faithfulness. Misha hadn't been faithful, but his father didn't stop loving him for it. No, he wanted to help Misha to become a faithful boy and have a clear conscience again. Even when Misha lied and said that nothing was wrong, his father didn't get angry. Instead he told him that he had seen everything that had happened and it made him very sad. Have you ever made your father sad? How does it make you feel? Misha realized that he had done something wrong when he saw how sad his father was. When he began to cry, Papa was there to comfort and help him to make things right again.

Maybe your parents don't always see when you've done wrong. But there is someone who does, and he is a faithful Father. Just like Misha's papa, God wants to spend time with you and teach you what is good and right. Sometimes you run off and do something wrong and think no one notices. But your heavenly Father sees. And it makes Him sad. Do you know why? Because everything we do wrong will be judged before the King of kings. Nothing will be hidden then. That is a scary thought!

Do you know that God really wants to help you so that you won't be ashamed to stand before Him? But the things we do wrong cost a lot to fix up. Misha thought it was a lot of money that Papa paid back to the blind man. But do you know that our sins cost our heavenly Father a lot more than a hundred kopek? Sins have to be paid by death, and so God gave up His own dear Son to die for us. Isn't that wonderful? We must believe in Jesus, and obey Him, just like when Misha obeyed Papa and ran to give the coins to Sasha. Then you will have a clear conscience and be happy again!

When your conscience pricks you next time, remember that you have a faithful Father that loves you. Tell the truth and ask Him to help you to make things right. Then you won't need to be ashamed.

Can you find the missing words for these verses? (If you don't know what they mean, ask someone who does!) Now match the pictures from the story to what the Bible teaches about it.

1 John 4:16  
"the \_\_\_\_\_ that God hath to us"

James 1:14  
"he is drawn away of his own \_\_\_\_\_"

John 3:19  
"And this is the \_\_\_\_\_"

Isaiah 53:4  
"Surely he hath borne our \_\_\_\_\_"

Romans 5:8  
"Christ \_\_\_\_\_ for us"



# Learning to Forgive

Judah is learning how to love and forgive the children he plays with. One day he and his brothers were playing marbles with a Bulu boy. The boy started out with only three marbles of his own, but by the end of the game he had six. "Are all of those your marbles?" Judah asked him, suspiciously. A few looked very familiar. "Yes!" he said. Judah's mom heard the boys talking and came over. "Are you a giaman [liar]?" she asked the Bulu boy. "No," he said. Then he took the six marbles home with him. Judah felt sad and upset. "Mom, he's lying. He stole my marbles!" "I know it doesn't make you feel good when someone lies and steals from you," Mom said kindly. "We will pray about what to do."



After praying, the Lord gave Mom an idea. "We will give the boy another marble from our prize bag," she told Judah. "Jesus

wants us to turn the other cheek and do good to those who do evil to us. The Bible says that we will heap coals of fire on his head." At first Judah wasn't so sure that it was a good idea. But after he thought about what Mom had said, he decided it would be good to try it out.

So they went together to find the Bulu boy. Mom smiled and gave him a really big marble. He just stared at them in confusion. He could not understand why they were being kind when he had been selfish. Now Judah and his family are praying for him. Best of all, the Lord has helped Judah to love and forgive him.

- shared by

Judah's mama



**Buried Treasures**

Has someone ever cheated you? Have you been hungry or sick? Maybe you have a pet that causes problems. God has something good for you in all these things. Read these stories and see!

I HOPE WE CAN PRINT  
YOUR STORY  
NEXT!

Do you have an experience to tell?  
I will send an email notice\* before the next issue. I hope to hear from you!

\*email us if you aren't included

Love  
Courage  
Gentleness  
Trust  
Kindness  
Faith

Patience  
Meekness  
Truth  
Goodness  
Peace  
Joy

# Praise God, He Cares for Us!

John and Winnie and several other children live with Grandpa Lawrence and Grandma Joyce. One Saturday Grandma Joyce came out of the kitchen with bad news. "The gas and all the provisions are almost gone," she said. Grandpa Lawrence had been in bed with malaria for a week and a half. Now there was no gas to light the stove and no food except a packet of milk and some tea leaves. The children did not complain that they were hungry. Instead they encouraged one another to wait and be patient. "God will care for us," they said. "Yes, let us pray," agreed Grandma Joyce. So together they knelt and prayed. It was good to tell their good heavenly Father what they needed. Soon they did not feel troubled at all. Instead they sang songs of praise! "God is so good, God is so good, God is so good to us!"

Grandpa Lawrence was lying in bed feeling sick, but he smiled when he heard them sing. And in about two hours

he heard something else. The phone rang and Grandma Joyce answered. "That was our friend from the city," she said with a big smile when the call was over. "She has sent us two thousand shillings for food and other needs!" "Praise God! He has taken care of us, just like we said," the children said, happily.

Only a few days later Grandpa Lawrence woke up feeling well and strong again. "God has healed me!" he shouted, as he leaped with joy. "I don't feel any more aches and pains!" "Oh praise the Lord, He is so good!" Grandma Joyce agreed, with a happy smile. Grandpa Lawrence hunted for a Bible story book and opened to a picture. "Look, here is the lame man that was healed. He is running, and leaping, and praising God. That's what God has done for me, too!"

- shared by Grandpa Lawrence



## KITTENS!



I prayed for my cat to have kittens. My cat had 4 kittens. And I had kittens! I played with them. I made play houses for them. God helped them not to get bitten by a snake or sprayed by a skunk. Then we prayed for good families to have them. They all got good homes! - Judith, age 4





# A Lesson in Character



*Over the past couple years I've had two horses and God has taught me character lessons through them. One important lesson is that "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." My first horse wasn't my preferred color and was so dead broke and old that he wasn't very exciting to me. My second horse was a beautiful mustang mare and she looked just right for me. From the outward appearance, I liked her a lot more. But as I got to know her, I realized that she was unpredictable. She threw tantrums over little things, such as not having her dinner on time! She was a beautiful horse, but you couldn't safely trust her. On the other hand, my first horse was not so beautiful on the outside, but had a good heart. He could be safely ridden by my younger sister because he was trained. I could teach him tricks because he knew all the basics so well. I realized, even though man looks on the outward appearance, the heart is really what matters. This is true for myself and others, too.*

*- AutumnGrace, age 13*

## Tim's Secret

Tim wasn't a quitter. When he saw something that needed to be done, he pitched right in. He could unload a trailer of manure and dig a drainage pit without giving up halfway. He was happy when he was serving.

Tim was someone you could trust. His wife left him soon after they were married, but he kept loving her and treating her kindly. He was always thoughtful with his words and never complained, even when others gave him a hard time.

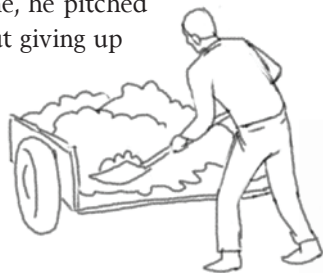
Tim was a good friend. When someone had troubles, he would listen to them and offer to help if he could. Tim didn't talk much. Instead he prayed. It is always a blessing to be around someone like that!

Do you know the secret of Tim's life? It started when he was 8 years old and he realized he needed to be saved from his sins. He put his trust in Jesus and was born again (John 3:3). Tim knew he needed God's help to do what was right. So he found a log in the woods and went there to pray. He read his Bible and asked God to help him do just what it said.



The more Tim spent time with the Lord, the more his life was filled with God's love and patience and gentleness. Even though he had many troubles, knowing Jesus gave him joy inside. One little boy who knew him said, "Tim walked with God. I want to walk with God, too." He realized that the good-ness in Tim's life didn't come from Tim. It came from being with God.

Not long ago, Tim got very sick with malaria. When he realized that he was going to die, he wasn't afraid. "I put my life in God's hands," Tim said, "and I'm still keeping it there." He trusted God and lived for Him with all his heart. Now Tim can be with the Lord forever! —a friend of Tim



Love  
Courage  
Gentleness  
Trust  
Kindness  
Faith

Patience  
Meekness  
Truth  
Goodness  
Peace  
Joy

*Do you know that God cares?*

*Whether our needs are big or small, God wants us to talk to Him and ask for His help. When good things happen, it pleases God that we are thankful. Let's remember to pray for each other!*

# A Place for Prayer

## REQUESTS AND THANKSGIVINGS



There is a baby that we are adopting that will be born in August. Please pray that he will be born safely and normally. I'm thankful that I have brothers and sisters to be kind to. - Ellianna, age 8

Pray that I would have a pure mind, and not look on the outward appearance. - AutumnGrace, age 13



We are thankful that one of our kittens is a really good mouser, so we can keep it. - Lillian, age 7

I am thankful that Jesus came to deliver us from everything that would hurt and destroy us. Let's keep praying for the people that are caught in the snares of the devil. When we put our trust in Jesus, He can work! - Aunt Laura

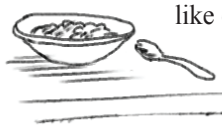
## Let Me Tell You... How Elly Chose Joy

*Bang! Ker-splat!* The plastic bottle bounced out of Elly's hands, spraying milk formula everywhere. What a mess!

Elly started to cry. "This always happens to me when I try to get the nipple on top!" she wailed. She was eight now, and Mama had decided that she was responsible enough to have her own special pet. How excited Elly had been at first! But she had found out that bottle-feeding a baby goat was sometimes a big pain.



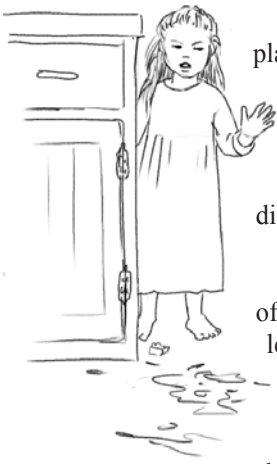
And today everything had seemed to go wrong. First, Clarabelle the cow had been difficult so Mama had to go out to help with the milking. That meant that breakfast wasn't made when Aunt Laura came to help for the morning. And then they had to eat oatmeal, which wasn't Elly's favorite. Especially when Aunt Laura didn't put enough sweetener in it. Elly had been asking for more sweetener when Aunt Laura remembered that the goat hadn't been fed. So now Elly stood in the middle of a milk formula mess while her bowl of salty-tasting oatmeal sat at the table getting cold. Wouldn't you feel like crying, too?



"We'll just have to clean it up," Aunt Laura said, grabbing a couple rags. She gave one to Elly and told her to wipe off the counter first.

"Can't you help me?" Elly asked, looking dismally at the globs of milk powder and pools of water all over the floor.

"We'll work together," Aunt Laura said. "Stay out of the kitchen," she warned the little ones, as she wrung out a sopping rag and gave it back to Elly.



But little sister chose that moment to get annoying. “You left your boots out by the playset,” she told Elly, in her I-know-more-than-you voice. “You don’t want them to get rained on, do you?”

“Stop being a boss,” Elly retorted. “I’m having a bad morning and I don’t need you to tell me what to do!”

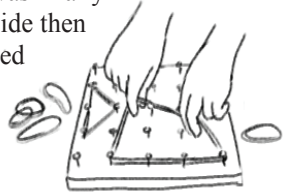
Little sister poked her head around the counter to see Elly’s “bad morning.” That didn’t help one bit.

“Get out of my way!” Elly said, impatiently.

“Go back to the table and finish eating,” Aunt Laura said, marching little sister out of the kitchen. Elly could hear her saying that Elly was having a trial and it was best to leave her alone. “What’s a trial?” little sister asked. She was almost four and could be so frustrating sometimes! But Aunt Laura patiently explained that trials were when you had something hard to do and you had to be brave to do it.

But Elly didn’t feel so brave that morning. When the mess was finally cleaned up, she still had to eat the nasty oatmeal. Mama came inside then and agreed that she could add some cinnamon to make it taste better. But Elly dumped too much in by accident, and it tasted worse than ever!

At last breakfast was over and the kid goat was fed. Elly’s trials were over and she could have math class with Aunt Laura. Despite being late, they had a few minutes to try out the new geoboard Aunt Laura had brought. It was so fun to make designs with the rubber bands that Elly didn’t want to stop. “Maybe tomorrow, if we have enough time,” Aunt Laura told her, tucking the board away in her bag.



But the next day math class was Elly’s big trial. For her warm-up activity, Elly always wrote a 4-digit addition problem on her slate while Aunt Laura set the clock. Then she would solve the problem and subtract to see if she was right. When she was finished, she would find out how long she had taken. Elly’s best score had been 1 minute when she had added 6661 to 1116.

“Maybe I could get done in 1 minute again,” Elly thought, as she quickly wrote the same problem on her board.

But Aunt Laura said, “Not the same numbers. This time use 8 and 2.”

Elly thought that wouldn’t be too hard. She wrote out 8882 plus 2228. Everything was going along fine until Elly started subtracting. Oh, no! The answer didn’t match.

“Maybe you should add these numbers again,” Aunt Laura suggested. Elly felt a sinking in her middle. She hated having to do something over again – especially because it made everything take longer! Dismally she erased the bottom of the slate and starting adding all over again.

Sure enough, the numbers came out differently – with a whole row of ones. When Elly wrote down the subtraction problem, she had to regroup every single column. That took a long time. To make matters worse, her numbers kept getting crooked and she had to keep erasing them. Then the columns didn’t line up.

“I can’t do it!” Elly said, in exasperation. “It is all turning out wrong!” She felt like crying.

“Don’t let the gloom of the day drag you down,” Aunt Laura said, cheerfully. She started humming “The joy of the Lord is my strength,” as she helped Elly straighten out her numbers. “Look, you are almost done. All you need is to subtract the two from the last ten. You already know the answer for that!”

Elly sighed and wrote the last 8 in place. At last the horrid problem was finished. But it had taken way too long. “Sixteen minutes!”





Elly cried in dismay when she counted up the difference between her starting and finishing times. “That was horrible!”

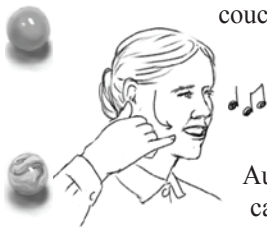
“But you finished the problem, and you got it right,” Aunt Laura said, encouragingly. “That’s two good things! I know you wanted it to be quick, but doing a long problem shows that you are really learning.” But Elly wasn’t happy. There wasn’t time for the geoboard design and her class was ruined.

“You have to make a choice right now,” Aunt Laura pointed out. “You can think of everything that went wrong, and how you didn’t make your goal of doing your math problem quickly...” Yes, that was what Elly was thinking about. And it made her so frustrated!

But Aunt Laura was still talking, “Or you can choose the joy of the Lord. I’m glad I’m choosing joy today, because I might be frustrated and gloomy if I didn’t!” Aunt Laura began singing, but it didn’t improve Elly’s mood.

“I always get things wrong!” she complained. “It took so long that we don’t have time for anything else!”

“But that happens to all of us,” Aunt Laura said. “Did you hear about Mama’s trial with the yogurt this morning?” Elly hadn’t, but the description of yogurt all over the counter reminded her of yesterday’s mess. “Isn’t it a good thing that Mama took courage in her trial and worked to solve it, instead of crying on the couch?” Aunt Laura said, with a little smile.



Elly almost smiled back thinking of her Mama acting like a cry baby. No, Mama never did that. “You see, the joy of the Lord is our strength!” Aunt Laura said. “Why don’t you sing it with me?” She started adding a few hand motions to the song. “See, it will cheer you up!” Elly didn’t want to be cheered up, but finally she decided to join Aunt Laura in making hand signs to go with the words. “After we learn it really well, we can teach the others,” Aunt Laura encouraged her. “Choosing joy is so much better than letting the gloom of the day drag you down!”

After Aunt Laura went home, Elly thought about the song and the new hand signs.

The next morning before math class, she had an idea. On a bright strip of paper she wrote the words to the verse. Then she taped it to her desk.

Aunt Laura smiled when she saw it. “That is right! I’m going to choose joy again today. I hope you will too, because I’ve decided I’ll just leave you to work by yourself if you want to be gloomy.”

But Elly had already decided that gloom wasn’t going to drag her down this time. Even when little sister got to play with the geoboard while she was solving problems on her slate. “Oh, no – she broke one of the rubber bands,” Elly said. But she didn’t get mad or yell at little sister.

“What’s that?” Little sister asked, pointing to the bright strip of paper.

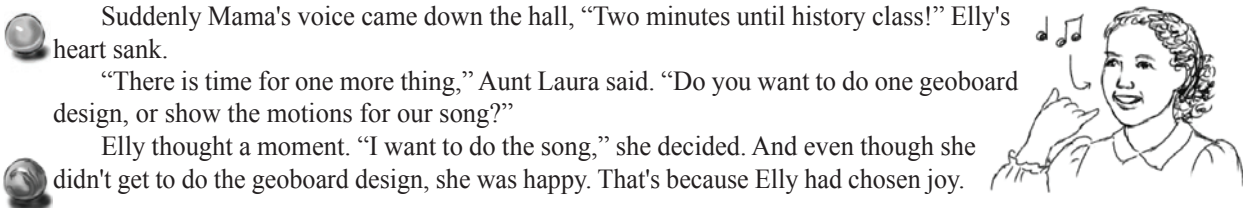
“It’s a song we’re going to teach you at the end of class,” Elly said, smiling at Aunt Laura. “That’s right,” Aunt Laura agreed.

“You can use my slate to draw on,” Elly told little sister, when it was time for math drills. And because she chose joy, she felt happy and content, even though she didn’t get very many of the drills done before the timer went off. It didn’t matter, because now they would get to do the geoboard design!

Suddenly Mama’s voice came down the hall, “Two minutes until history class!” Elly’s heart sank.

“There is time for one more thing,” Aunt Laura said. “Do you want to do one geoboard design, or show the motions for our song?”

Elly thought a moment. “I want to do the song,” she decided. And even though she didn’t get to do the geoboard design, she was happy. That’s because Elly had chosen joy.



# Becky's Bramble

"Are you ready to hear more about the bramble story?" Mom asked one afternoon, as they were snapping beans on the back porch. The two foster boys, Todd and Benny, were too busy playing in the sandbox, but Joseph and Jessica were eager to listen.

"The story about Becky?" Jessica asked. "I've been wondering if she will get rid of her bramble plant."

"Too bad Todd doesn't want to listen," Joseph added. "Last night he told me that he was mad because he never did anything right, so I told him that Jesus could change his heart. He didn't seem to like that idea very much, because he changed the subject."

"Yes, most people don't want to deal with their problems. It is easier to change the subject and make excuses than to face how serious it is to sin against God," Mom said. "When we ended Becky's story last time, she was looking at the thorny thief-vines crawling under her fence, remember?"

"And Mrs. Sharp said she would call the police if she didn't get rid of them," said Jessica. "Does she?" "Let's see," said Mom, as she began:

BECKY STOOD OUTSIDE HER gate and glared across the street at Mrs. Sharp's yard. "I'm not going to obey any old busybody. Just look at the thistles in her ditch!" Becky muttered to herself. "No one is going to make me chop up my bramble, because I don't want to!"

"Well, what are you doing out here?" Becky heard a kind voice say. She looked up to see Mrs. Wise.

"I'm chopping off these bramble vines," Becky said in a small voice, and swung the hoe. Mrs. Wise just looked at her.

"They aren't much of a problem, really. It was just because..." Becky's cheeks turned pink as she tried to think how she should tell about the accident. "It was the mail carrier's fault. He was riding too close to my fence yesterday!" she finished.

"The mail carrier?" Mrs. Wise looked surprised. "Was it your bramble that sent him to bed all bruised and bleeding? I was over there last evening to help his wife bandage him up."

Becky didn't know what to say. She had only been thinking of herself and hadn't thought of

what her bramble had done. "Was he hurt bad?" she asked at last.

"Not so badly hurt as you are going to be, if you let this thing keep growing," Mrs. Wise said soberly. "Have you heard of Burning Day, Becky?"

Becky shook her head. "It is the day when all the gardens of Peopleville will be inspected. Those that have weeds in them will be burned up."



“Burned up?” Becky asked, looking worried. “But what if you can’t get rid of the weeds, no matter how hard you try?”

Mrs. Wise looked up at the giant bramble. It was nearly as tall as the house now. “How hard are you trying, Becky?” she asked quietly. “Last time you told me you liked it there.”

The tears came to Becky’s eyes then and she shook her head. “No, I hate it!” she cried. “I don’t want that old bramble any more!”

“Oh, yes, you do,” Mrs. Wise said, quickly. “You told me you just love to keep snipping off its leaves. What has happened to your clippers?”

“I don’t like snipping it!” Becky stomped her foot. “It scratches me and makes everyone mad at me!” She felt like running off to her room to cry, but Mrs. Wise was blocking the gate way.

“Are you mad at me, or at the bramble?” Mrs. Wise asked.

“The bramble,” Becky muttered.

“Angry enough to get rid of it?”

Becky sniffed sadly. “I try and try, but I can’t.”

“Yes, it is too big for you to get rid of by yourself,” Mrs. Wise agreed. “But it must be killed.”



“Killed?” Becky remembered what Mr. Green had said about weed killer. Would it really work?

She was about to ask Mrs. Wise when her mother called: “Stormie’s on the phone!”

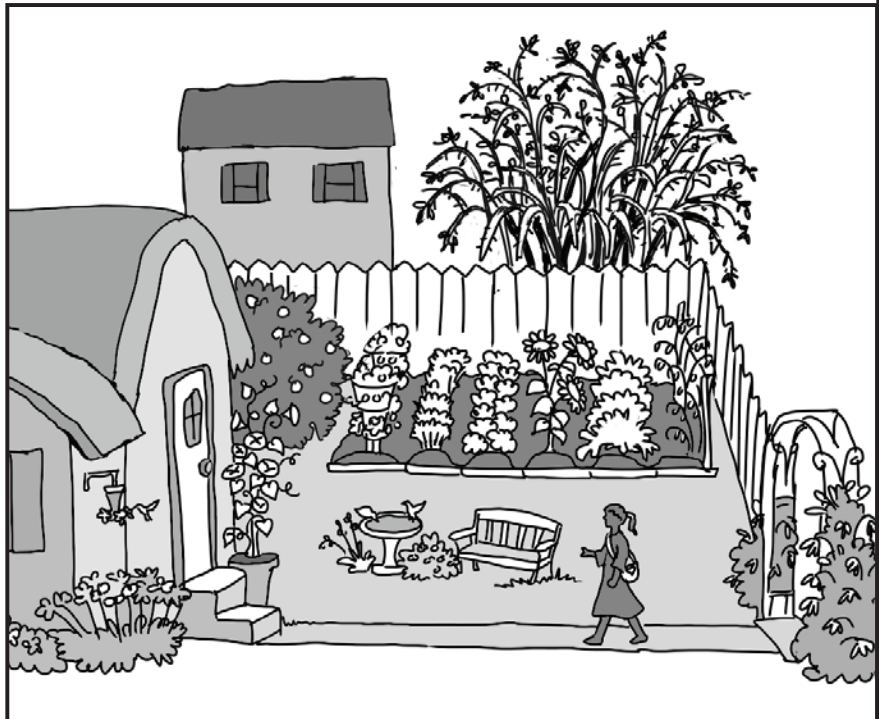
“I have to go,” Becky said quickly, and darted up the walk.

“Did your bramble really send that old mailman flying?” Stormie’s voice asked. “Did you get in trouble?” Becky was glad when the topic turned to kittens

and the school picnic. She was tired of talking about her bramble.

But that night she had a nightmare. The bramble had grown into a monster and held her prisoner with its giant spines. She could hear the crackling of flames coming closer, but she couldn’t get away!

Becky woke up in fright. The wind was blowing the branches of the bramble against the house.



It scraped and crackled just like in her dream. “I must get rid of it before it is too late!” she told herself as she huddled under the blankets.

The next morning Becky was just about to go see Stormie’s kittens when she remembered her nightmare. Instead she went and knocked on Mr. Green’s door. She had never noticed how beautiful her neighbor’s garden was before. Bright morning glories grew up the wall and the straight rows of vegetables were well kept. There were no weeds to be seen. Then Becky blushed with shame. Over the fence rose the dark and ugly head of her very own bramble bush! Mr. Green had carefully cut off every branch that crossed his fence, but to Becky they looked like monster teeth. She shivered.

“Why, it’s Becky!” said Mr. Green, opening the door. “What can I do for you, my girl?”

“Do you have a little weed killer that I could borrow?” Becky asked, as bravely as she could.

Mr. Green smiled. “A little weed killer? To borrow?” He looked up at the bramble mountain and rolled his eyes. “Are you sure you won’t need a whole gallon? Perhaps we should go to the pesticide center together.”

“Does it cost money?” Becky asked in a small voice. Mr. Green nodded. “I only have three dollars,” she said, pulling out her purse.

“You’ll need all of it,” Mr. Green said.

Becky thought of the soda pop she was going to buy for the school picnic. What would Stormie say when she told her that she had spent all her money for weed killer? Mr. Green was heading down the street. “Are you coming, Becky?” Becky looked up again at the bramble monster, then ran after him.

“I’m glad she went,” Jessica sighed with relief, when Mom ended the story. “I almost felt like giving up on her! It seemed like Becky would never get rid of that bramble, even though she kept saying she wanted to.”

“She hasn’t got rid of it yet,” Joseph pointed out. “I’m curious to know what happens when they get to the pesticide center. Do we have to wait to hear the rest, Mom?”

Mom stood and took the pan of green beans. “Maybe we should get some of our own weeding done before I finish the story. I saw some thistles starting to bloom behind the bean row and there are several dandelions growing with the cucumbers.”

“I’ll get them out!” Joseph said quickly. “We don’t want any more of those in our yard!”

“I’m glad to see my son applying the lesson so quickly,” Mom said with a smile. “Jessica, would you please help Benny get washed up for supper? I think he will need a bath.”

“I don’t want a bath!” Benny yelled, from the muddy sand-hole he was sitting in.

“You don’t want sand in your bed, do you?” Jessica said with a laugh, as she took the little boy’s hand. “Come on, you can turn from a mud-puppy into a seal in the bath tub!” She smiled at Mom as she passed through the kitchen with a sandy scowling boy in tow.

“I see some beautiful patience and persistence flowers blooming,” Mom said, encouragingly. “Keep up the good work, deary!” Then she called out the back door, “Todd, after you wash off I need you to help Joseph weed the beans and cucumbers. You might even find a cucumber for supper!”

Todd frowned for a moment, then looked over at the garden. “Can I eat it all myself?” he asked.

“If you pull out all the dandelions yourself, then you can eat the whole cucumber,” Mom decided. “But if you need Joseph’s help, then you’ll need to share. Sounds fair?”

“I can do it myself!” Todd said, quickly. “You’ll see.”

Mom smiled as she watched Todd grab the trowel and head into the garden. Maybe he would learn that being a conqueror was worth it, after all. (to be continued)

# Treasures of the Kingdom

PO Box 1212, Jefferson, OR 97352

e-mail: [totk@timelesstruths.org](mailto:totk@timelesstruths.org)

website: [totk.timelesstruths.org](http://totk.timelesstruths.org)

Dear Reader,

This issue has a special activity - check out page two for details! But even more important is whether you are checking out God's Word. Do you read the Bible and ask God to show you what it means? Do you want to live like Jesus teaches? We pray that you do! Forgetful hearers get robbed (check out the front cover, and James 1:22-25).

**Do you have something to share or questions to ask?** We are glad to receive your letters and emails.

For older ones who want to be challenged and encouraged in Christian living, *Foundation Truth* is published for youths and adults. Online issues and other literature are available at [timelesstruths.org](http://timelesstruths.org).

We are a God-fearing family that includes Rick and Krista Erickson, and their daughters: Laura, Kara, and Amanda. The publishing of *Treasures of the Kingdom* is mainly done by Laura and Amanda, as we look to the Lord to provide content and direction.

The paper is freely sent to those that request it. You will be kept on our mailing list unless you request otherwise. If the Lord leads you to send anything, please note that since we are not a business we cannot cash checks made out to *Treasures of the Kingdom*.

In the King's service,  
The Editors

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SEND TO:

*How many marbles can you find?  
There should be 95 including this one:*



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